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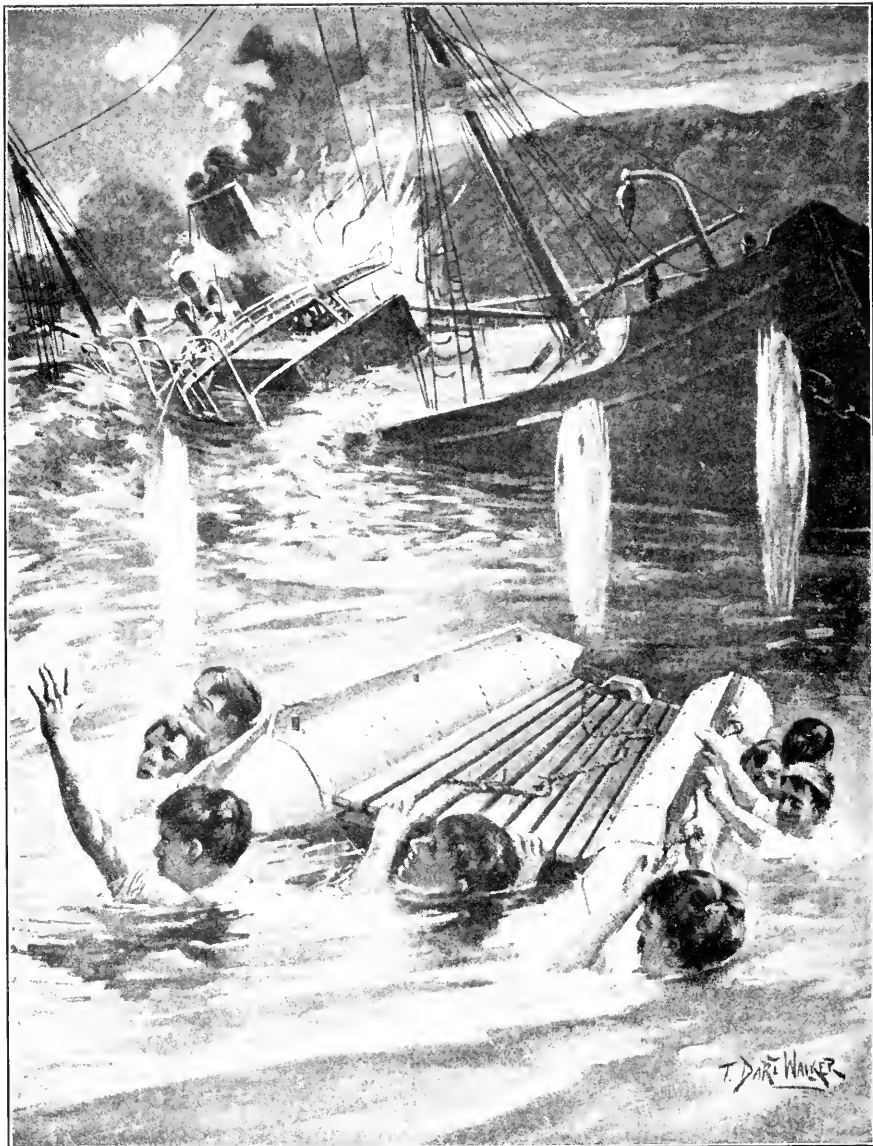


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THE ESCAPE OF HOBSON AND HIS COMPANIONS

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Brave Deeds of American Sailors

By
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Brave Deeds of American Sailors

CHAPTER I

WITH PITCHFORK AND SWORD

THERE was great excitement on the water-front of Machias, away down on the eastern coast of Maine, on Saturday, the ninth of May, 1775. Men and boys were running down to the wharf, shouting to each other as they ran ; women were scurrying out of their kitchens, their aprons thrown over their heads, shrilly discussing matters with their neighbors ; little children left off their play to stare and wonder.

A vessel had just come into the port from Boston. There was nothing unusual about that ; many vessels came to Machias to load hay that grew on the rolling hills about the town, or lumber cut from the dense pine forests that bristled for miles behind the bay. But this craft brought big news. Something had happened in Boston that they all knew would change history. There could be no doubt of the meaning of the word that the crew from the vessel were spreading among the men of Machias, who had hurried down to the water to hear.

Every sailor of the crew was surrounded by his

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own little knot of listeners, and was going over the story from the beginning for the benefit of each belated arrival. They were telling how the British redcoats, who had been stationed for a long time in Boston, had fallen foul of the patriots round about and had let blood which would surely lead to the letting of much more blood before the matter was ended. They were telling how the patriots, expecting trouble with the redcoats, had organized trainbands in all the towns about, and militia companies of minutemen; men ready to turn out and fight at a minute's notice. How they had been gathering together cannon and powder and military stores and had put it away in Concord and other places.

They told how the patriots, expecting that the British might attempt to seize the stores, had been watching the redcoats closely; how they had arranged signals with lights in the belfry of Old South Meeting-house; how, one night, Paul Revere had seen the light hung out, jumped on his horse, and run through the country, giving the alarm. How the good patriots had come tumbling out of their beds in his wake, snatched up their guns, and gathered for a defense of the stores. How, when the British reached Lexington early in the morning, after marching most of the night, they had found a company of minutemen drawn up on the green to receive them. How Major Pitcairn, leading the British troops, had cried out: "Disperse, ye villains! Damn ye, why don't ye disperse!" and had

ordered his men to fire when the patriots stood their ground.

The news of the attack on the men at Lexington had run like a fire through the countryside. The patriots had gathered about Concord and met the redcoats with a hail of bullets. The redcoats had turned back to Boston, unable to destroy most of the stores, which had been buried or hidden. They had been beset all the way by the farmers and townspeople, firing on them from behind walls and trees. The redcoats, on the run, with their tongues hanging out of their mouths, had been saved from destruction or surrender at last only by the timely arrival of reinforcements from Boston. All this they told the men of Machias, over and over again, adding many details to each repetition to freshen the story.

The little town of Machias had not been greatly disturbed by British rule. They were far from the center of things, and not in any way important. Only one thing had they suffered at the hands of King George. All the tallest and straightest pines in their forests had been set apart for the use of the English navy ; no woodman could lay axe to them without incurring the royal displeasure and punishment. Even now there were two British sloops in the harbor, under the protection of a British armed schooner, the *Margaretta*, loading lumber to be made into barracks for the redcoats in Boston.

Aside from that, the citizens of Machias had not

been troubled much ; they had little complaint to make for themselves about the oppression of King George. But they knew what the men about Boston had been through, and their hearts were with them. Now, when they learned that their fellows in Massachusetts had been fired upon, and some of them killed, by the red-coated hirelings of the king, they raged into zeal for the cause of liberty. They would help ; they would do their little best to drive the red-coated tyrants from their shores.

They said so, all of them, many times over as they stood about the deck of the vessel from Boston, talking with the crew, and casting many darkling glances at the two sloops and the *Margaretta*, the armed schooner that had them in her care. They hated the flag of Great Britain that swung in the breeze of the armed vessel out in the harbor.

Dennis O'Brien, at the end of a long silence which had been filled with a scowling gaze at the detested emblem of tyranny, dragged aside one of his companions. The O'Briens were six stout sons of an Irishman ; Jerry O'Brien, the tallest and stoutest of the six, was a leader in the village in everything that required pluck and determination and good sense.

Dennis O'Brien, leading aside his companion, whispered something in his excited ear. The two went among the others, whispering. The crew, one by one, was taken aside and told to say nothing of the affair that might reach the ears of the British in

the vessels in the harbor. Then the citizens quietly dispersed, going away by twos and threes.

That night sixty men stole to a little house in the dark woods behind Machias. For a long time the sound of their low voices might have been heard, if any one had been there to listen. But there was no one.

They would do what they could for the cause of liberty. They must do something ; their blood was aroused. They would capture the *Margaretta* ! To-morrow would be Sunday. Every Sunday Captain Moore, of the *Margaretta*, came ashore to attend service in the tiny church on the hill. Captain Moore had heard nothing of the trouble in Boston ; there were no telegraphs in those days, and no express trains delivering the morning papers throughout the land.

Captain Moore had been at Machias two or three weeks now, and was beginning to feel at home there. He had found the citizens fairly friendly ; they had done nothing more than scold and growl because he had come there for their lumber. Their growling was nothing ; he had no thought of harm coming to him from them. They were subjects of the king whose servant he was. What would they do to him ?

They made up their minds what they would do to him that night, in the house in the dark pine woods—splendid place for the hatching of a plot ! They would capture him and his vessel. They would do it in this way. They would divide into two parties.

One party would go to the church ; some would go inside and some would surround the building, while the British officers were at worship. It was not a very nice thing to do, to carry war into the church, but liberty must be served, and they must do something to cool their heated blood.

Then, while one party held Captain Moore and his officers captives, the other party would put out to the *Margaretta* in boats and storm her before the crew could guess what it was all about.

The next day came, as next days will, and brought the Englishman ashore to attend service. It was a pretty day ; the sun warm and bright over the fields and hills and harbor, the leaves bursting from their buds, the birds twittering in the branches, the cows enjoying the fresh green grass in the meadow. It was such a pretty day that Captain Moore, who was reminded of Old England by the view, took a pew near an open window that overlooked the slope of the hill on which the church was perched, and the wharf and river beyond.

Seated in the pew and stealing a peep about the church now and then to help while away the long hour or two of the sermon, Captain Moore fell to wondering why so few of the men of the congregation were present. He wondered, too, why those few had taken their seats close to him, and why they kept looking at him from time to time, beneath their eyebrows.

Glancing out of the window presently, he wondered

what all those men were up to who came by twos and threes to the wharf; and why they carried with them muskets and great pistols and scythes and reaping hooks and pitchforks and axes.

But he did not wonder long. Something told him that everything was not as it should be. He felt it in the air. With a sudden shout to his companions, he leaped to his feet, rushed to the open window, and disappeared through it from the sight of the astonished congregation, his men after him.

The minister stopped and stared. The men who had been set to watch the captain glanced sheepishly at one another. The women screamed a little, and giggled. They did not know what it meant. They only knew that it was funny to see the captain of a British ship leap through an open church window right in the middle of the meeting.

The minister stepped down from the pulpit and went to the window where a part of his congregation had vanished. The matter required investigation. Looking out of the window, he saw the British captain, with the other officers at his heels, running as fast as their legs would carry them toward the river, their coat tails flapping in the wind, their hats in their hands. Behind them, in full chase, as tight as they could clip it, was an armed company of his flock, brandishing all manner of outlandish weapons and shouting mightily. Another band was running over from the wharf to cut off the captain and his staff from the river.

The commotion outside was tremendous. The conspirators, their plans upset, all ran after the Englishmen yelling frantically. The tumult roused an old salt who had been enjoying a nap on the deck of the *Margaretta*. He woke up and looked over the rail to see what it was all about. What he beheld was his worthy captain flying down the hill from the church with the whole country at his heels.

The old salt rubbed his eyes and pinched himself solemnly on the cheek twice before he could believe that it was not a dream. Convinced at last of the reality of what he saw, he ran over to one of the swivel guns, loaded it, and took a shot at the pursuing crowd.

The shot held the men of Machias where they were. They had not counted on that. When a shot fired at you with the intention of killing you is not provided for beforehand in your plans ; when your mind is not made up to it, you are not likely to know what to do, and you will probably stop where you are to think it over. The men of Machias found it so. They were not so much frightened by being shot at, as they were surprised, and deprived of the power to think beyond the first instinct to keep out of the way.

Relieved of his pursuers, the captain and his officers made their way to the water in more seemly haste ; a boat came ashore for them, and Captain Moore went aboard, fuming, puffing, and astonished. He could not make it out, having heard nothing of the recent

event in Boston. As a feeble expression of his opinion of the affair, and the people of Machias, he fired a shot or two over the town from his swivel guns, and drew down the river to a safer anchorage.

Monday morning Denny O'Brien and Joseph Wheaton met by chance on the wharf, and fell to mourning about the miscarriage of their plans. They had come so near to taking the *Margaretta* that it was tantalizing. Their talk was full of "ifs"; they worked themselves up into a state of high excitement over it. "We can take her yet," exclaimed Wheaton, at last, smiting his thigh with his fist.

"How?" asked Denny O'Brien, eagerly. He was ready for any adventure, but he did not see a way.

"There are them sloops," returned Wheaton, pointing to the lumber sloops that the *Margaretta* had brought to Machias. "'Twould be easy enough to take one of them. Then we could get a crew of volunteers and go down and take the old Johnny Bull."

Denny's eyes glistened. "That we will, lad," he cried, and looked about for a way to make a beginning.

At that moment Peter Calbreth and Hoseah Kraft came sauntering along. Dennis turned to them. A few minutes of animated talk, and the four walked over to the sloop, discussing the weather and the condition of the grass in the meadows. The crew of the sloop was busy loading and storing lumber. They paid no attention to the loafers on the wharf.

The four men went aboard and strolled among the crew. Before the Englishmen knew what was going forward, they were seized in strong, rustic arms and carried ashore. The four haymakers were in possession of the sloop.

Being young and full of the joy of living, they raised a mighty cheer in honor of their success. The town was in an unsettled frame of mind, and the cheering brought all the citizens down from their shops and fields in a hurry.

"What's in the wind?" cried Jerry O'Brien, perceiving his brother and three companions strutting up and down the deck of the sloop.

"We're going down to take the Britisher," returned Wheaton, and explained the project in all the pride of having thought of it. A large crowd of men and boys had gathered by this time.

"My boy, we can do it!" shouted Jeremiah O'Brien, with enthusiasm, smiting his thigh as Wheaton had done.

A great scurrying among the bystanders. They flew off in a dozen directions. Presently they began to come running back. Some of them carried muskets; one of them staggered under the weight of a "wall-piece"—a kind of musket too heavy to be fired offhand, but needing a wall for its support. Some had pitchforks; some, axes. Others carried powder-horns and bullet pouches. One brought a bag of bread, expecting a long cruise. Another, a few pieces of pork. Three or four of them rolled a

cask of water aboard the sloop. The astonished crew of the sloop sat apart on the wharf and watched the proceedings.

The entire townful of men and boys wanted to go. Thirty-five of the strongest were chosen ; there were no bravest. They were all brave, for that matter. The thirty-five tumbled aboard, hoisted sail, and started after the *Margaretta* before a spanking northwest breeze. All they had for weapons were twenty muskets, one wall-piece, with three rounds of powder and ball for each ; thirteen pitchforks, and twelve axes. The enemy had four six-pounders and twenty swivel guns. And the British crew outnumbered the men of Machias on board the sloop.

But they did not think of that as they sailed down the river toward the *Margaretta*. If they had thought of it, Jerry O'Brien, whom they had made their leader, would have made them forget it. They were there to capture the *Margaretta*, and they were going to do it.

Captain Moore, watching the behavior of his late sloop from the quarter-deck of the schooner, was not pleased with what he saw. What had got into these wild men of Maine, that they made free with his sloops and came down to him in hostile array ? If he had heard the news from Boston he might have known what had got into them.

Captain Moore was not a coward ; he showed that plainly enough later in the day. But now he ran away from the haymakers. Perhaps, not knowing

that the redcoats in Boston had already fired on the patriots at Lexington, he did not wish to let these foolish farmers pick a quarrel with him that might lead to a bloody war between brothers. Whatever was his reason, he hoisted his anchor and set sail to get out of the way.

And, whatever his reason, he made a mess of getting out of the way. The wind was fresh from the northwest, and his course was due south, but he set his mainsail to with the boom to starboard. Any boy would have known better. He had not gone far before he had to jibe the mainsail over to the port side. It went across with a rush ; the sheet got too much slack in it, and the boom brought up abruptly against the back-stays. The jerk was too sharp for the piece of wood ; it snapped off short at the point of impact.

The haymakers in the sloop, seeing the *Margaretta* get under way while they were at a distance, and believing their prey would escape, set up a shouting in their rage, and taunted Captain Moore with being a coward, saying many things to him and about him that it would not have been pleasant for him to hear. But when they saw his boom go, and the mainsail crumple into a limp and flopping mass of canvas, they set up a different cry, sure that they would overtake him after all. It never occurred to them to think that they needed to do more than overtake him in order to make a finish of him and his boat. That was the spirit with which they went

into the affair ; and that is a good frame of mind to be in when you undertake to do anything in this world.

Captain Moore was a long way ahead when the accident happened. Not far from him, lying closer inshore, was a merchant schooner. He put in to her, crippled as he was, and made no ado about robbing her of her boom. She could get another at her leisure ; as for himself, he had no leisure just then. He had it aboard and slung, and the sail bent to it, before his pursuers came up with him. This time he made better work of getting under way.

But as he wore off into the bay at the mouth of the river, the following sloop proved to be a better sailer. His new boom could not get out of the mainsail all the speed there was in it ; it did not fit as it should have, and there was no time to adjust it.

The mad crew of men carrying pitchforks and axes, with the Irishman Jerry O'Brien at their head, came up little by little as the two stood down the bay. " Now, then, Johnny Bull, we'll soon have ye ! " cried Jerry O'Brien. He never thought of the odds ; of the four six-pounders and the twenty swivel guns against their twenty muskets and one wall-piece, with three charges of powder and ball for each.

Neither did the other men of Machias think of such details as they thronged along the rail of the sloop, eager to get closer to the enemy of liberty and the friend of tyranny, as they already had come to look upon Captain Moore. Those who had muskets

held them ready to fire. Tom Knight, moose hunter from the back woods of Maine and a famous dead shot, balanced the heavy wall-piece across the gunwale, waiting with glistening eye for the time to come when it would be safe to chance a shot. They had only three rounds apiece for the muskets; they must make every shot tell.

Captain Moore, still eager to avoid an encounter, cut loose the small boats that he was dragging astern. "Aye, aye, cut away your chicks; 'twill do ye no manner of good, man!" shouted Dennis O'Brien, from the bows of the sloop.

The distance between the vessels was growing less. There was bustle aboard the *Margaretta*. Captain Moore was on her quarter-deck giving orders. Men were running to and fro, and hovering about the swivel guns.

A spurt of smoke leaped from one of the swivels. Before the whistle of the first shot had left the air, the entire broadside of the *Margaretta* leaped forth.

Jerry O'Brien ran his eye quickly along the rail to see which of his neighbors and friends might have been struck down by the storm of balls that had swept across the water. One man in the waist of the sloop clapped a hand to his chest, crumpled up, shuddered, quivered, and lay still.

Tom Knight was sighting the wall-piece with great care and deliberation. It roared forth. The man at the helm of the schooner lurched forward

across the wheel and dropped to the deck, giving the wheel a turn as his body fell.

The muskets rattled all along the rail of the sloop. The rest of the Britishers on the quarter-deck scampered for safety. There was no one left to set the wheel, which had been turned over by the falling body of the quartermaster, who had been slain by Tom Knight and his wall-piece. With no one to steer her, the *Margaretta* swung a point or two into the wind, her sails spilled and flapped idly, and she hung in the water, with slackening speed.

"Now, then ; after 'em, boys!" cried Jerry O'Brien.

Rushing through the waves under the full press of all her canvas, the sloop dashed toward the drifting schooner, and struck her heavily. At the instant that they hit together the men in the sloop began to clamber aboard the schooner with wild yells, brandishing pitchforks and axes, swinging their muskets about their heads.

The jolt of the collision rattled the crew of the schooner from their hiding places. They came bouncing on deck, armed with cutlasses, pikes, and muskets. Captain Moore stormed up and down the quarter-deck, brave enough now. He snatched up hand-grenades, lighted them, and tossed them over into the sloop as fast as he could.

Once, twice, three times the Americans struggled up the sides of the schooner, seeking to carry her by boarding ; and once, twice, three times, they were beaten back. The sound of heavy blows, the ex-

plosion of hand-grenades, the popping of muskets, the grunts of the fighters, the curses and cries of the hurt, the cheers of all, mingled in a terrific din. Captain Moore all the while was fighting like a tiger, urging on his men ; and, like a lion, Jerry O'Brien was pressing forward at the head of his.

Some one, drawing apart from the mêlée, aimed a musket at the English captain, where he stood raging and fighting magnificently on his quarter-deck. The man pulled the trigger ; it was the last shot left. The captain's face was twisted in sudden pain and horror ; he lurched forward, and fell his length on the deck of his schooner.

"Now, then, lads !" cried Jerry O'Brien, seeing him fall. "The captain is down."

And he headed a last rush for the decks of the schooner.

Some of the defenders had seen their captain fall, and the news ran through them like a breeze through the tops of pine trees. For an instant the defense slackened. In that instant the Americans poured upon the decks of the British craft, and the end had come. The men, finding themselves hopeless before the stubborn determination of their wild enemy, laid down their arms and surrendered. The haymakers of Machias had captured H. M. S. *Margaretta* !

But it had cost them dear ; the fight had been fast and furious. More than twenty men, a quarter of all engaged, were killed and wounded.

Captain Jeremiah O'Brien found on the captured

vessel muskets, cutlasses, pistols, hand-grenades and ammunition. He placed the cannon and weapons on the sloop, which was lighter and faster than the *Margaretta*, rechristened her the *Machias Liberty*, and set out in her for Boston, carrying with him for crew a goodly band of the men of Machias. He was of great service to the Continental troops about Boston, capturing British powder craft and furnishing powder in that way for the use of the besiegers of the town, who needed it badly, and otherwise doing much mischief to the British shipping thereabouts.

But the end of his career is another story.

CHAPTER II

WHEN JOHN PAUL JONES BEGAN TO FIGHT

It was the afternoon of September 23, 1778. Four ships of war were beating northward against a light wind toward Scarborough Head, on the eastern coast of England; four smothers of white sails, sweeping gracefully over the sparkling sea of the summer day. Floating above the stern of each was a flag new to the seas, as the ages of flags are reckoned. It carried thirteen broad stripes, alternately red and white. In the upper corner, near the staff, was a field of blue bearing thirteen stars of white. It was the flag of the United States of America, the young country that had sprung into life two years before, and was now struggling for existence with Old England, its mother.

Although all of the vessels carried guns, which frowned across the water from their open ports, the practiced eye could have seen that only one of them was built for the sole purpose of war. That one, carrying thirty-two guns, had the lines of a frigate; the high sides, the swelling walls, the bulging bows and stern. One of the others was clearly a converted merchantman; another was a little craft of only twelve guns. The fourth was a great, lumbering hulk, high

in the bows, with a poop that was almost a tower. If it had not been for the ranges of guns that showed through her ports she might have been taken for an East Indiaman; which, indeed, she had been until called into service as a man-of-war.

What were they doing there, those four ships of war, flying the American flag under the very nose of the enemy? What mad audacity brought that absurd little fleet to the coasts of England; of England, mistress of the seas? The odds against them in those waters were dozens to one; England's navy boasted many vessels, any one of which could have swept those four from the face of the ocean. What was their errand? What was their hope of escape from the risk they ran?

The answer is simple. The answer is: John Paul Jones! The little man in the French coat, heavy with gold brocade, and a Scotch cap, pacing the quarter-deck of the old East Indiaman that was doing present duty as a ship of war; that little man with the dark, quick face, and nervous step; with the ringing voice and flashing eye, was the reason for this snapping of the fingers under the nose of John Bull. He it was that dared to beard the British lion in his den of the sea.

Three times he had sailed up and down the coasts of the right little, tight little island, capturing and burning British ships, threatening British towns, throwing British subjects into fits of fear. Once, in the *Ranger*, he had captured the British frigate *Drake*, off Ireland.

Once he had gone into the harbor of Whitehaven, spiked the guns of the fort, and set fire to the shipping. Another time he had gone ashore to capture an earl, and would have done it if the earl had not luckily been away from home. Fancy an English earl being dragged out of his castle by a handful of upstart Americans!

The English government called him a "pirate," and placed a price upon his head. They swore that if they captured him they would hang him. Mothers made their babies stop crying by telling them that Paul Jones would get them; young boys frightened themselves with him in their play. Never a sail came in sight of a headland of England that the people did not spread the alarm that Jones was coming, and run to shelter. One time a member of the English Parliament, seeing his vessel and mistaking it for an English frigate, sent off to it for powder and ball with which to defend his estate, saying that Paul Jones was on the coast. Paul Jones had a sense of humor. He sent the M. P. a keg of powder, with a message that he had no ball of the right size.

This sense of humor of his took weird slants. He was a Scotchman born—John Paul was his real name; he added the Jones afterward, for reasons that are not known—but he had come into possession of a plantation in Virginia left him by a brother, and had settled on it. He liked America, and he loved the American ideas of liberty. So, when the colonies revolted against George III he had done what he could.

He had been a sailor, and naturally took to the sea for fighting.

At last he got command of the frigate *Ranger*, 22. Then his sense of humor came into play. He thought: What a joke it would be to sail over to England and stir up the snug old Britishers in their own homes! It has been said, you know, that an Englishman's house is his castle.

He sailed off, full of his joke. To make the joke better, he attacked the town where he had been employed when a boy as clerk in a store—a sweet revenge, with a good laugh in it. But here is the height of his jesting. The old earl whom he attempted to carry off, and would have, if the earl had not been lucky, was the earl under whom Jones's father had been gardener when Jones himself was a little boy.

It is well known that an Englishman does not readily see the fun in an American joke, and they saw no fun in those that Jones was playing on them. If they had, they would not have called him a pirate, and put a price on his head. They would have tried just as hard to catch him, of course, but they would have laughed over him at the same time, and would not have threatened to hang him.

Of course, the threat to hang him made the joke all the more delightful to Paul Jones. Because, before they hanged him they must catch him. Also, it let him know how much he was teasing them. I fancy Paul Jones had many a quiet chuckle in his own cabin over it all.

The crazy old tub in which he was beating off Scarborough Head on this afternoon in the summer of 1778 was another relish in the general joke. It added zest to sail against England in an old East Indiaman that had been taken off the seas because it was worn out and not safe. He had obtained her through the French King, Louis XIV, after much trouble and dickering.

It was after his return from that raid on England when he had attacked the town where he had worked in a store, and tried to carry off an earl, and had captured the frigate *Drake*, that he got the old East Indiaman. He put into France when he came away from England. For a long time he pulled wires, trying to get another ship. Benjamin Franklin, who was in Paris at the time, did what he could to help. France, you will remember, was assisting the young country over seas in many ways, as a blow against her old enemy, England. But it was difficult to obtain any satisfaction; there was too much bickering politics in the French capital.

One day, after he had been trying several months to get a ship, Paul Jones was reading "Poor Richard's Almanac," written by wise Old Ben Franklin. Reading, he came to this maxim: "If you wish to have any business done faithfully and expeditiously, go and do it yourself. Otherwise, send some one else."

Paul Jones slapped the book together, slammed it down on the floor, got up, put on his hat, and started

to Paris to see the king. He saw him, and talked to him, as man to man. The king was impressed, and in due time gave him the old Indiaman—*Duc de Daras*, it was named. And an old hulk it was, to be sure. Many of its timbers were rotten with age. The craft was awkward; surely it would not be a smart sailer.

Jones had said, in a letter written to the commissioners who were trying to get him a ship: "I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm's way. You know I believe that this is not every one's intention. Therefore, buy a frigate that sails fast, and that is sufficiently large to carry twenty-six or twenty-eight guns, not less than twelve-pounders, on one deck. I would rather be shot ashore than sent to sea in such things as the armed prizes I have described."

But he had waited so long now that he was hopeless of getting anything better than the *Daras*, so he began at once to make her as staunch as he could and to fit her out for fighting. She carried twenty-eight twelve-pounders on the gun-deck, and eight long nines on forecastle and poop. Jones had six ports cut in each side in the gun-room, below the gun-deck, and had six eighteen-pounders cast, which he mounted there. He had six more ports than guns; that was a part of his humor. He had found how much could be done by a show of force.

Not forgetting that he had obtained the ship by following the advice he had read in "Poor Richard's

Almanac," Jones called the craft the *Bonhomme Richard*, which is free French for Poor Richard.

At last, after more months, Jones was ready to set sail. Other vessels were added to his to make a little squadron. There was the thirty-two gun frigate *Alliance*, built in America and named in honor of the recent alliance between France and the colonies. She had been sent to France bearing Lafayette. As a further compliment to the French, a Frenchman named Landaïs was put in command of her. Part of the crew were French; part were Englishmen who had been made prisoners in various fights; part were Yankee sailors. There had been a mutiny aboard on the voyage to Europe, but it had been nipped in the bud. We shall hear more of Landaïs presently.

Another of the little fleet was the *Pallas*, twenty-two guns, a converted merchant vessel. The third was a small twelve-gun sloop, the *Vengeance*. They were each commanded by French naval officers, and manned largely by French seamen. This was the fleet that was cruising off Scarborough Head on the afternoon in September.

They had had trouble from the beginning. When they first set out, Jones had a crew made up of men from all parts of the world: Americans, Europeans, Laskars, negroes; human driftwood of the seas. They had not proceeded far when Landaïs, in the *Alliance*, deliberately fouled the *Richard*, doing so much damage that they had to return, and spend two or three months repairing.

Perhaps there was luck in that, for before they set forth a second time a number of Americans arrived in the port who had been prisoners in England and had been exchanged. They joined the crew of the *Bonhomme Richard* and strengthened it both in numbers and character.

Now, off Scarborough Head, Jones was walking up and down the high poop of the *Richard* with a quick step and a dancing eye, looking for a fight. He had had enough of chasing merchantmen; he wanted some one to come along who would try his teeth; the joke was losing savor.

Samuel Israel said that he would get it, too. Samuel was one of the marines on board the *Richard*. He vowed he smelled a fight in the wind. "Fie, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. If he's alive he'll soon be dead, for jolly Paul Jones will knock off his head," chaunted Israel, lounging in the midst of a knot of marines on the main deck of the *Richard*.

Sam was the wag of the marines; Jones was a man after his own heart. He was a thin whip of a man, was Israel, with a face that looked not unlike an ice pick, from a side view; a very long nose, and a slanting forehead and chin. You would not have picked him out for a fighter. But he had his little jokes, just as Paul Jones had, and that was one of them. He was the most surprising fighter on board, in personal encounters. He would give up anything for a bout. He loved it; loved it so much that whoever fought

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with him became thenceforth a fast friend, whether he whipped Israel, or, as more frequently happened, Israel whipped him.

A marine, as you know, is a soldier aboard ship. When there is no fight it is his business to act as policeman; Israel was a very good policeman. When there is a fight, it is the duty of the marines to take muskets and pick off the enemy's gunners and marines. If there is boarding to be done, or boarders to repel, the marines do it. Besides their muskets they had in those days cutlasses and boarding pikes furnished them for such occasions.

In action the marines were variously stationed about the ship. Many of them were in the tops—the platforms on the masts—where they could pop down on the decks of the enemy. Israel's station was on the maintop, which was, in some respects, the most important and the most dangerous on board. He was a dead shot; he had been known to shoot a gull on the wing with the ship rolling under his bandy legs.

To-day he smelled fight, and was full of joy. He glanced up on the lofty poop, where Paul Jones tramped up and down. Lieutenant Richard Dale was with him. Dale was another fighter; none better. In the beginning of the war between the colonies and the mother country he had not been able to decide which side he wanted to fight on. All he was certain of was that he wanted to fight. By chance he joined a British privateer. He was wounded in a fight

she had with a Yankee, and while he lay recovering he had more time to think things over. The result of his thought was that he joined the American cause as soon as he was well enough.

He sailed in the brig *Lexington*, which went to the West Indies for supplies for the Continental army. The brig obtained what she went for, and was returning, when she fell in with the British frigate *Pearl* and was captured. While the prisoners were being transferred from the brig to the frigate, a gale freshened up, and the work had to be discontinued. Dale was still on the brig.

That night the wind blew so hard and the sea got so rough that the Englishman in charge of the *Lexington* paid little heed to the Americans locked up below deck, not believing they would attempt anything with such a sea running, and the brig in danger of swamping. But Dale was aboard. If the Britisher had known more about Dale he would not have felt so secure. Dale led the men in a rush on their captors, retook the brig, and sailed her into Baltimore.

The *Lexington* was captured again later in the war. Dale was still on her. He was taken to England and thrown into Mill Prison, in Plymouth. There he lay rotting for a time. He tried to escape once, but was caught and put away in the dungeon for forty days. As soon as he got out of the dungeon, he was put back again for singing rebel songs. No doubt now which side he was on.

Another year, and he made a second escape. This time he had better fortune. He made his way to France, sought out Paul Jones, who was preparing to get away in the *Richard*, and offered his services. Jones looked him between the eyes, and made him first lieutenant. It is well that he did. Perhaps Jones could not have done what he did later in this summer day if Dale had not been there to help him. And perhaps neither of them, nor both of them, would have done what they did if it had not been for Samuel Israel, the waggish maintop-man who already smelled the blood of an Englishman. You can make up your mind to that after you have read the story.

As Captain Jones and Lieutenant Dale paced the deck of the poop and Samuel Israel sniffed the southerly breeze for the odor he had mentioned, a sail peeped out beyond Scarborough Head. A sail was cause for excitement those days. It might be anything; it might be sudden death, or sudden wealth. As a matter of fact, such fellows as Israel did not care overmuch which it was as long as it offered a chance to spill a little of the blood which made perfume for their nostrils. Rather savage days, those.

All hands turned out to have a look at the sail, and speculate on it. As they looked, another came peeping around the point, and another, and another. Before they had ceased to round the point, there were forty-two sail in all.

Jones and Dale put their heads together. They scanned each vessel, as it appeared, with powerful glasses. Much depended on the two pairs of glasses. The four little American vessels were well to leeward. They could run away if the fleet was a fleet of war vessels. But if it was not a fleet of war vessels, there was much for them to stay for. They might bring down many of the forty birds in that flock, and their bones would have much meat on them.

The glass of the commodore, sweeping from ship to ship of the large fleet, came to a frequent stop on a certain two of them. They towered higher with their white canvas; their sails were trimmer; they lacked the little touch of slackness observable to the eye of a naval man in a merchant ship. The two were at the rear and on the flanks of the fleet.

Jones said little to any one. He gave an order, and the *Richard* went on the port tack, standing for the shore in front of the fleet. Clearly he was not going to run away; Samuel Israel, sniffing the breeze, smacked his lips and wagged his head gleefully.

The quartermaster broke out signal flags from the main truck, telling the others to follow. But the fellow Landais, the Frenchman in command of the *Alliance*, stood up toward the fleet, followed by the *Pallas*. "If they carry more than fifty guns we must run away," said Landais to the captain of the *Pallas*, as he passed within hail. So much he cared for the

orders of Jones, who was in command of the squadron. And the captain of the *Vengeance* cared no more, for he straightway pulled out to sea.

By this time the Englishmen, who had been doing some wondering themselves, came to a decision. The larger of the two ships that had been under the especial inspection of Commodore Jones broke out signals, and the flock of sail broke up, scurrying in a dozen directions. Out of the bunch came sailing the two, flying the ensign of England.

"Yah!" grunted Samuel Israel, joyously, and clambered up the ratlines to the maintop, dragging his musket after him, as happy as a small boy who climbs a tree for a view of a ball game.

The breeze was light; the vessels drew together very slowly. The *Alliance* sailed with no purpose, drawing off and coming back. The *Vengeance* was far to leeward. The *Pallas* behaved better, but Captain Jones did not put much faith in any French one of them.

Night was coming more swiftly than the enemy. An evening mist of the sea crept out of the water, dimming but not hiding the vessels from each other. Darkness came, and they were still far apart.

The high headland of Scarborough was thronged with people who had come to look at the spectacle of a sea fight. The news had gone abroad that Paul Jones was about to close with His Majesty's ships. The moment was thrilling. Paul Jones, the pirate, the marauder of their homes, in a struggle to the

death beneath their very eyes! Every small boy in the countryside was there; no mother so brutal as to make him go to bed on a night like this.

Darkness descended. The watchers ashore saw four long horizontal rows of square lights slowly drawing closer to each other; the battle lanterns gleaming through open ports. Vague in the glow from the lights, caught back on the water, they saw the shadowy clouds of canvas. They saw, and waited breathlessly.

It had been hours since the fleet was first sighted aboard the *Richard*. The strain was severe. The men stood by their guns, snarling at each other, nervous, strung to a tension that vibrated with every trivial event. They had had too much time to think of what was coming; they had stared death in the face too long for their good. Sudden destruction must be sudden, or it loses its charm.

Silence was upon the deep; silence broken only by the plashing of the waves against the timbered sides of the ships and the creaking of their cordage and the rustle of their sails as the back swing spilled the faint breeze from the corners of the canvas.

Officers paced softly up and down the decks behind the gunners; powder monkeys, as they called the boys who brought the powder from the magazines, stood apart, ready to run for more powder when the little they had fetched should be used. Up in the maintop Samuel Israel hummed something about blood and bones. And up on the lofty poop

of the *Richard* a small man in a Paris coat, with a Scotch cap thrust on his head, stood motionless, peering into the night through a night-glass. Now and then he gave an order to the man at the wheel, who nodded an "Aye, aye, sir," threw the spokes over a hand or two, and made the rudder creak a response.

Slowly, slowly, and more slowly, on the fainting breeze, the low, long line of lights that was the enemy's port-holes drew closer. They were coming on bow to bow, on different tacks.

They overlapped, bow on bow, a half pistol shot apart. A suppressed sigh shivered down the ranks behind the guns. The moment had come! In another minute none knew which one of them might be lurched into eternity.

"What ship is that?" The hoarse cry started the quick breath in each man. It was a hail from the British frigate.

"I smell the blood of an Englishman," whispered Sam Israel to himself, toying with the lock of his musket, to make sure, in the dark, that it was ready to set the fragrant blood upon the night air.

An answer from the high poop where Paul Jones stood, Lieutenant Dale at his side and his officers about him. "What is that you say?" in the voice of Jones. The vessels drew abreast; he was waiting for one more moment to give him a better position.

"What ship is that? Answer immediately, or I shall fire into you."

He had his answer. It came in a sheet of flame from the open ports of the American ; it was borne to his ears in a mighty rush of sound ; the roar of a score of guns.

And in the same moment the British guns burst forth with their broadside. The fight was on.

A tiny pop from the maintop, a drip of sound after the deluge of noise that had accompanied the exchange of broadsides, told that Israel was feeling out for the blood that had so long been in his nostrils.

A broadside fired by one of those old wooden ships used to shake her tremendously. It was like hitting a barrel with a mallet ; every timber in her jarred and trembled. Also, the noise was terrific. But when the *Richard* fired her first broadside at the Englishman, there was more than the usual recoil. There was a quicker, sharper thump, and an upward thrust. The men on the gun-deck felt it most. And there was more noise of explosion down in the gun-room where the eighteen-pounders were than the three of them in use in the broadside might have been expected to make.

The cause was not far to find. Two great holes in the gun-deck, fringed with splintered wood that stuck upward at the ends, told the story ; that, and the cries in the gun-room below. Two of the three eighteen-pounders that Jones had had cast in France for his ship had burst at the first fire. Huge masses of the barrels and breeches hurtled through the air, tearing asunder the men who attended the guns,

ripping through bulkheads, chopping down thick stanchions, rending the decks above and below. A couple of pieces had pierced the gun-deck above.

In the same moment when the men aboard realized the disaster that had taken place below, they also learned how rotten was the ship to which their lives were now entrusted. The balls from the enemy's guns tore through the bulwarks and planking like a pea from a blower through wet paper. There was no life to the *Richard's* wood. It gave mushily in front of the striking blows of the shot. Traced across her deck were furrows through the fighting men, mangled wretches on each side marking the course of the balls whose progress nothing but soft wood and softer flesh had opposed.

Gunners slunk from their guns, appalled. None knew whether his piece might not be the next to hurl itself into a hundred deadly fragments; none knew whether the next ball from that long, low row of lights floating at a half pistol shot across the water might not tear him limb from limb.

Paul Jones, seeing the panic about to break, leaped from the quarter-deck and ran among them, cheering them on, laying hand to a rope here, sighting a gun there. There was contagion in the man's courage. He made death seem a trifle. They turned back to their work, and poured in another broadside. They threw the heavy guns about like toys, ramming home the shot to shouting, and firing them to rounds of cheers.

The night was filled with the flash of the guns and clangor of the broadsides. Sam Israel, up in the maintop waiting for the vessels to draw near enough to bring his musket into good use, smelled blood enough. He looked down upon heaps of men strewn over the decks of the *Richard*. Pools of blood drained off into the scuppers and ran sluggishly down the sides, pushing crimson froth ahead of them.

The *Richard* hauled across the bows of the British ship, trying to get in position to rake. The enemy was too skilfully handled, and too good a sailer. She yawed off and took a course that would cross the course of the *Richard* in time. Both keeping on as they were, they continued to fire as rapidly as they could.

Jones was not long in seeing that all the advantage in this kind of fighting lay with the Englishman. Of his own battery of three eighteen-pounders on a side, not one was left in use. After the explosion of the two in the first discharge, no man would work the others, and no man could be asked to do so. Nor could they have worked them if they would. The shot from the ten eighteen-pounders of the enemy swept across the decks of the gun-room like a draft of wind. In less than half an hour the six ports that Jones had had cut in the ship's sides were torn into one huge chasm. Stanchions were cut away, timbers severed, planking chewed to bits, on both sides of the ship, so that the balls entering on the

engaged side soon passed clear through and fell into the sea beyond, without striking anything. It was no place for human life.

Nor was this the worst. Many of the shot from the enemy had taken the *Richard* on the up roll and torn holes below the water line. She was leaking badly—"like a basket," said Sam Israel, telling about it afterward. And the battery of twelve-pounders on the gun-deck, above the room where the guns had blown up and which was now swept by the enemy's shot, was being silenced, one gun by one. Now a missile would swing against the muzzle of one of them and throw it from its trunnions or split it into fragments. Now a solid shot would strike against the carriage, jamming it hopelessly. Now a charge of cannister would whisk away the men behind the gun.

In an hour Jones had only three guns with which to answer the enemy ; two long nines on the quarter-deck, and one twelve-pounder. The long nines he directed himself, loading and firing with cannister, aiming at the upper deck of the enemy, with now and then a double-ended shot sent against their mainmast.

The English vessel was slowly drawing ahead of the *Richard*. If she should get a position ahead and rake the length of the vessel with a couple of broadsides, there would be little chance for the Americans. They knew the danger, but were not able to avert it.

Now she was well ahead, and swinging in to cross. Commodore Jones was not averse to coming closer ; this long range sparring was wearing him down. He kept on his course, seeing that the other would not have time to cross. The captain of the English vessel perceived as much presently, and endeavored to get clear of the oncoming *Richard*. But he was too late ; the American's bowsprit swept over the quarter-deck of the Englishman.

Now the men had a rest ; those that were left. A lull came over the fight ; not a gun on either vessel would bear. The captain of the Englishman, perceiving that the Americans had ceased firing, called out. "Have you struck ?" he shouted.

Then came the answer. You have heard it ; it is one of the first things in history, and one of the best.

"I have not yet begun to fight," said John Paul Jones. There is humor at its best !

For a moment the two vessels clung to each other in a clinch. Then they drifted slowly apart. As they parted, the first flash of the moon rose over the sea. Time out of mind the moon had looked down on fights by land and by sea. It had beheld primordial beasts rending each other with tooth and claw ; it had seen men clad in skins beating each other's brains out with stone bludgeons ; it had watched the fleets of Greece and of Rome, but it is safe to venture that it had never seen a better fight than the one which it had arrived in time to behold this night.

For it was quite true that John Paul Jones had not yet begun to fight. When many another man would have ceased and hauled down his flag, Jones was limping into the conflict with a deadly earnestness that would not be denied of its purpose.

As the two drifted apart he kept up the fire with the guns he had left, and sought to close once more. His whole object now was to get close and grapple with the enemy. He had no guns left on the engaged side but the two nine-pounders against the full batteries of the enemy, which were making pulp of his ship. Water was coming in more and more swiftly; the sides of the vessel, deprived of support after support by the shot of the enemy, were beginning to sway under the load of the decks. Perhaps if they had been called upon to take up the recoil now of full broadsides, the decks would have failed, and decks and guns would have gone crashing down below.

Now the moonlight showed the smaller English vessel hovering about, seeking to strike a blow, but fearing to lest she might hurt her friend as well as the enemy, for the two combatants were close together. As she hovered, the little *Pallas* bore down upon her and bore in. They closed in a fight on the outskirts of the larger, pounding each other with their tiny fists of iron with right good will.

The two larger vessels were squirming about in the sea, trying each to lie across the bows of the other. In the twistings and turnings, the jib-boom

of the English vessel swung slowly over the quarter-deck of the *Richard*. Jones was across the deck like a cat with a hawser in his hand. He passed a bight of the hawser about the jib-boom, and carried the rope to the mizzenmast. Stacy, the ship's carpenter, bent over to help him, knowing well what he was about.

Stacy was nervous and hurried ; the rope fouled. Stacy gave vent to a sailor's oath.

"Don't swear, Mr. Stacy," said Jones, quietly. "In another moment we may all be in eternity, but let us do our duty."

The rope was made fast ; the two gladiators were bound one to another for a death struggle.

But not so fast ! The jib-boom snapped under the strain, and the *Britisher* was drifting away.

He did not get far. The bight was thrown about the stump of his jib-boom, and this time it held. Tied together the two drifted alongside each other, bow to stern. Paul Jones was just beginning to fight.

Do not forget that all this time Samuel Israel was in the maintop of the *Richard*, fingering his musket. Now he rose to his knees, and peered over upon the decks of the enemy for a sight of an Englishman whose blood might need letting.

Both vessels were enveloped in smoke, but now and then through a rift torn in it by the breeze the moon shone down on groups of gladiators, standing like statues in the light of their battle lanterns. Such

glimpses were all the topman needed. His musket spat, and spat again, fired point-blank down upon the sweating men at the enemy's guns.

As the two came together, flank to flank, the side of the British ship that touched the *Richard* did not have a port open. They had been closed for fear the Americans would board through them. Now the British tars, trying to crowd them open so they might fire, found there was not room for them to swing. So they loaded and fired through their own ports, blowing them out.

Now Jones began to fight. Below deck he had no chance; the enemy had cleared him out. His men had come up to escape the torrent of iron that poured through the vessel from one side to the other. They rushed to the forecastle, where they fought with muskets and hand-grenades.

A hand-grenade is a little bomb, about the size of a baseball, loaded with powder and filled with scraps. It has a fuse, which is lighted before the grenade is thrown. It is cast into the midst of the enemy, where it goes off like a large and malicious fire-cracker. It is a nasty thing to have about your feet, or tumbling down on the top of your head, with the fuse sizzling. We shall have occasion to speak of them again presently.

You might not have thought that Jones gained much by tying his vessel to the other. Every shot from her was going through his poor old tub of a vessel, clear and clean. The enemy's guns out-

numbered his many times to one, and the crew was not less numerous. But he was satisfied. The other ship, for one thing, could no longer lodge balls beneath the water line, being too close to the target. And the range of the guns was for the most part limited to that part of the *Richard* where there was nothing left to shoot at but a yawning hole.

Fierce as the fight had been for two hours, it now sprang into a savage intensity that is not to be believed. The men on the two ships were so close together that when they wished to use their rammers to thrust the charges down the throats of the muzzle-loading cannon, they had to poke the other end of the ramrods through the open ports of the enemy.

"Fair play, there, you cursed Yankee!" cried one British tar, when an American sailor grasped the end of the rammer and would not permit him to use it.

"Look out for your eye there, Johnny Bull," shouted another American who was ramming a gun, thrusting the little end of the rammer into the face of an Englishman. It was a race; the guns were jowl to jowl. The first one that fired would certainly destroy the other.

The English were more spry. Their gun was discharged first, and the American gun was knocked from its trunnions. It was the last of the twelve-pounders on the gun-deck.

Jones, firing with his own hands the two nine-pounders on the engaged side of his ship, saw

another on the off side that was still intact. He called for assistance, and, with great labor, dragged it across. He loaded it with grape and cannister, and fired. The objects in his fire were two. One was to clear the upper deck of the enemy, so that he might board, and the other was to cut down the Britisher's mainmast. To this end he loaded one of the nine-pounders with double-headed shot, and continually fired it directly against the spar.

As he was so engaged, the ship surgeon came to him, and advised him to surrender. "The ship is sinking," he said. The carpenter had already reported five feet in the hold. "The water is gaining on the cockpit. I am forced to wade around in it while attending the wounded."

"What!" cried Jones. "Would you have me strike to a drop of water?" And he went on firing his long nines, leaving the surgeon to return to his wounded in the floating sick bay.

Smoke was pouring out of the hatches and the ports. The ship was afire in a dozen places, set by the wads from the British guns. Some of the sailors turned their hands to putting out the fires.

A man came rushing to the quarter-deck. "Quarter, for God's sake, quarter!" he cried. "We are sinking." He ran to the flagstaff and clutched at the halliards to haul down the flag.

The eyes of Paul Jones flashed fire. Lifting an empty pistol, he hurled it at the man's head. The heavy whirling weapon struck him; he fell to the

deck with a heavy groan, his skull fractured. John Paul Jones was just beginning to fight.

“Do you call for quarter?” asked the English captain, who had heard the cry.

“Never!” answered Paul Jones, calmly.

“Then I’ll give you none.”

The powder was no longer coming up; the powder monkeys were not to be seen. “Mr. Dale, go below and see why the powder has stopped,” said Jones. Lieutenant Dale stepped off to obey the order. Much depended on his going at that moment; more than either of them guessed.

The situation had become unique. The battle was in two layers. Not a man was left fighting below decks in the American ship; not a man, but the captain, was left above decks on the British. The cannon of the Englishmen were sweeping the insides out of the *Richard*; the sailors and marines on the forecastle and in the tops, with their grenades and muskets, had driven the enemy from her upper decks. And so the battle hung suspended.

Now two things transpired that came near changing the balance. When Lieutenant Dale reached the lower deck he found that a quartermaster, believing that the *Richard* was surely sinking, had set free two hundred Englishmen who were confined below as prisoners of war. These Englishmen were running free. It was nothing but luck that brought Dale down there when he went, but it was more

than luck that led him to do what he did. It was cool courage and intelligence.

"For your lives," he cried, "to the pumps. Quick about it. The *Serapis* is sinking. The *Serapis* is sinking. We must keep afloat, or we shall all be drowned!" He had seen the name of the enemy, in the light of flashing guns, painted on her stern.

Hidden from any view of what was going on, and unable to learn the true state of affairs, the released prisoners set to work on the pumps and at extinguishing the fires that were springing up here and there on the *Richard*. Dale's presence of mind accomplished two things. It occupied the attention of the prisoners, who might easily have overrun and captured the ship from the American crew, and it kept the old trap afloat without the aid of the American sailors, who were needed in the fight. He had turned threatened disaster to advantage.

The other thing that happened had to do with the Frenchman, Landais, who was in command of the *Alliance*. He had borne off at the beginning of the fight, but now he came swooping back in the light of the moon, and ranged across the bow and stern of the two grappling ships. Just as he was in line with them, he let fly a broadside; not at the Englishman, but at the American. Charges of grape whistled across the water and churned through the mass of men on the forecastle of the *Richard*.

Then for the first time Jones thought the end had

come, believing that the *Alliance* had fallen into the hands of the enemy, or that it was another ship of the enemy that had come up.

Another broadside and another came from the Frenchman into the crippled *Richard*. The Americans cried out, and set signals to show who they were, to no effect. Jones was ready to strike, when the ship hauled off through the moonlight, and was seen no more. She had done much damage ; many men had fallen before her guns who already had enough to do to fight the English. It was a wicked, a dastardly thing to do. It has been told that Landais was insane. Perhaps he was. Perhaps he merely wanted to bring about the surrender of the *Richard* so that he could have the honor of retaking her and capturing the Englishman.

You must not forget that all this time our friend Samuel Israel was in the maintop of the *Richard* ; and you must not forget that a hand-grenade is a small bomb that is lighted and thrown into the midst of an enemy. Neither must you forget that I have said that if it had not been for Samuel Israel, perhaps John Paul Jones would not have won the wonderful sea fight off Scarborough Head, under the nose of all England. See how true it is.

The two vessels being locked together by the rope that had been passed about the jib-boom of the English ship and the mizzenmast of the American, the yards of each overhung the other. And the fight having become a fight in layers, so that the

Englishmen were all below while the Americans were all above, there was no one on the deck of the *Serapis* to interfere with what Israel now set out to do.

The first thing he did was to get a slush-bucket full of hand-grenades, and a lighted match. He slung the bucket with a lashing over his shoulder, and took the stem of the match between his teeth. The next thing he did was to climb the main rigging again—he had come down on deck for the grenades,—and start out along the main boom that stretched over the deck of the English ship. With his feet in the foot rope slung underneath the yard, and his fingers on the jack-stay, which runs along the top, and to which the sails are bent, he crept farther and farther into the air.

Now he was over the *Richard's* gunwale. Now he was over the strip of water that was between the two. Now he was over the gunwale of the English ship. Now he was over her decks. Now he was at the end of the yard; on the yard-arm. Now his body lay along the yard-arm, reaching out beyond the last tip of spar. His legs were wound around the yard; his elbows hugged it. No one saw him, excepting Captain Jones. Jones saw everything that moonlight night—everything.

Samuel Israel, asprawl at the tip of the main yard, lighted a hand-grenade and tossed it down. He watched to see where it went. It struck on the planking, bobbed along, sputtered, and went off in the solitude of the deserted deck, doing no harm.

He had not thrown it far enough. His elbows were not free ; he had to cling on to the yard with them and his legs.

He lighted another, snapped it across with his wrist, and watched. It struck the combing of the main hatch, which was open, bounced, and went in.

"I smell the blood of an Englishman !" chuckled Israel.

He tossed another, and another ; a dozen.

Just after the last one disappeared into the main hatch there was a tremendous flash from between decks of the Englishman, and a mighty puffing roar.

That was what won the fight for John Paul Jones. Not that alone, but that was the beginning of the end. Of course, no one but Jones would have got that far in the fight ; but, having got that far, even Jones himself might not have got farther if Samuel Israel had not dropped hand-grenades down the main hatch of the English ship.

He was on a ship rapidly sinking. His guns were all out of commission excepting three tiny nine-pounders. His men were tired and disheartened ; they had fought for four hours and a half now and had been whipped for four hours and twenty-nine minutes. They knew it, if Jones did not. His sick bay was full of the maimed and mangled ; there was nothing left to him but his obstinacy.

Then Israel threw the bomb.

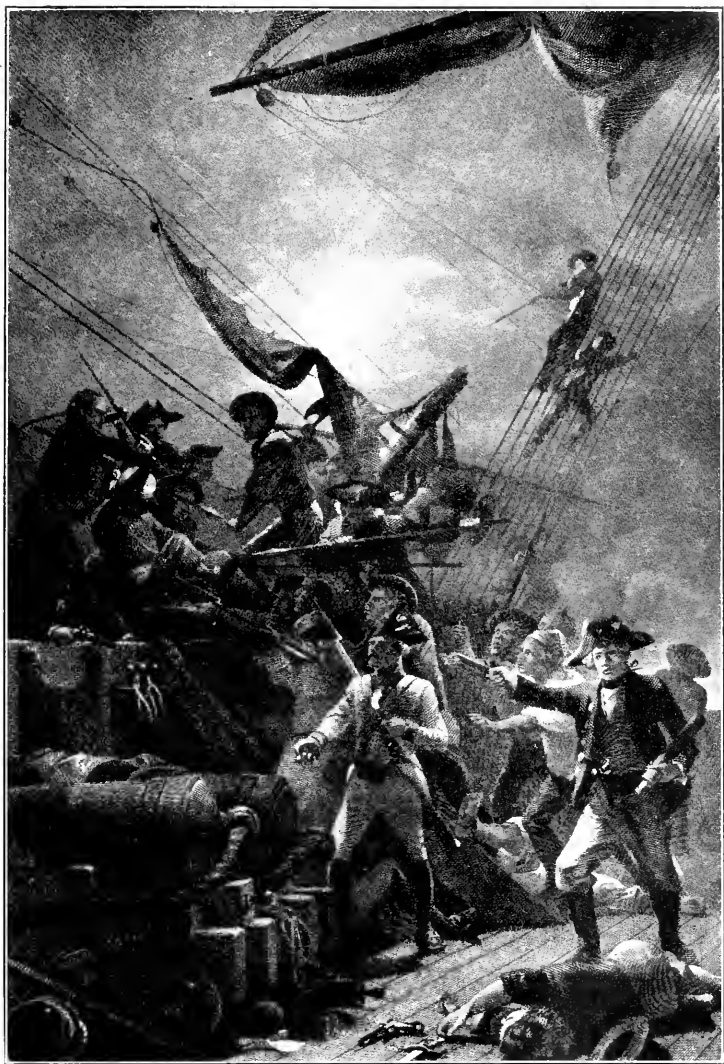
This is what had happened inside the British ship to turn the tide of war. The English powder

monkeys, bringing up powder faster than it was needed, had stacked it in the bags in long rows and piles behind the guns, handy for the gunners. The grenade had fallen among this powder, and it had exploded. More than twenty men were blown to bits. Others were horribly burned. Some were stripped of their clothing ; nothing was left but their neck- and wrist-bands.

At about the same time the mainmast of the *Serapis*, which had been gnawed at for hours by the little long nines aimed by Jones himself, fell by the board, bringing down the mizzentopmast.

What should the captain of the British ship do now ? His upper decks were cleared of men ; many of his guns had been silenced ; the enemy, whom he had whipped for four solid hours, was still fighting with a fury that did not diminish. He was grappled to the roaring hell of destruction ; he could not clear himself of the clinch that held him. Curses, shrieks, prayers came to his ears from the lower decks of his vessel, where the wounded men waited their turn to go under the hands of the surgeons.

He stood on the quarter-deck of his ship, a picture of chagrin and despair. Never had man fought more bravely and stubbornly ; never had man earned victory more fully, or had it more nearly in his grasp. But victory seemed to be but a state of mind, and the American was not of a mind that he had been defeated. Even now his French coat and Scotch cap, jammed like a gun-wad on the top of his head,



THE CAPTURE OF THE SERAPIS

appeared at the rail at the head of a boarding party.

As the first foot of the Americans struck the deck planking, the Englishman reached the halliards and with his own hands pulled down the flag.

John Paul Jones, seeing the flag flutter down, breathed a short sigh of relief, and his voice rang along his decks. "Cease firing!" he said.

Observe again what a strong right hand he had in Lieutenant Richard Dale. Dale went aboard as first lieutenant of the conquering ship, to take the possession of the conquered. He found the captain leaning against the quarter-rail, his head in his hands. What miracle had spared him through the hail of lead that had swept his decks of all but him cannot be guessed. Nine men had been shot from his side at the wheel by musket balls; their English blood let by the men in the tops of the *Richard*. Death was all around him, but he had come through it for the final humiliation.

Dale approached him. "I have the honor, sir," said he, "to be the first lieutenant of the ship alongside, which is the American Continental ship *Bonhomme Richard*, under command of Commodore Paul Jones. What ship is this?"

"His Britannic Majesty's late ship, the *Serapis*, sir, and I am Captain Pearson," was the response.

"Pardon me, sir," said the young American, remembering his manners, "in the haste of the moment I forgot to inform you that my name is

Richard Dale, and I must request you to pass on board the ship alongside."

The first lieutenant of the *Serapis*, coming up from below, stood beside them. Seeing the American officer, he asked if the enemy had struck.

"No, sir, I have struck," replied Pearson.

"I will go below and tell the men to cease firing," said the lieutenant, making a move to do so. "We have got three guns in commission still."

Dale was too wise for him. He was not to be caught napping. For five hours he had been straining every fibre of body and brain in the most exhausting possible work, but his thoughts were as quick as in the beginning. It is that quality that makes men great. He feared that the lieutenant, if he went below, would fire one last broadside and change the result of the fight when victory was in the grasp of the Americans. "Pardon me, sir," he said, stopping the Englishman, "but I must ask you to come aboard the ship alongside." And he sent one of his own men below to call off the Englishmen.

It was over. The day had been won. The most astonishing fight in naval history had been brought to a close. Victory had rested with him who for more than five hours persisted in denying, against every evidence and all the facts, that he was whipped. Jones had won by sheer and audacious strength of will.

The *Bonhomme Richard* was found to be surely sinking. There was no chance of saving her, al-

though the crew fought as valiantly to keep her afloat as they had fought before to destroy the *Serapis*. The prisoners and the wounded were brought aboard the captured frigate, and the next day the *Bonhomme Richard* settled beneath the waves to her last rest, bearing with her the bodies of those who had died in her defense, and with the American flag flying from her ensign-gaff. A final, fitting honor for them all!

Samuel Israel, marine and maintopman on the late American Continental ship *Bonhomme Richard*, standing on the forecastle-head of His Britannic Majesty's late ship *Serapis* as she lumbered her way under jury masts to the Dutch port of Texel, chaunted a tune under his breath.

"Fie, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
He was alive but we knocked him dead
And Davy Jones has tucked him in bed."

Those were the words he chaunted, swinging across the British waters.

CHAPTER III

THE MEN ON THE *MASTICO*

IT was nine o'clock on the evening of February 16, 1804. A small ketch was creeping into the harbor of Tripoli, on the Barbary Coast of Africa. Her large, loose sails puffed with the breeze that blew fresh from the Mediterranean; the water bubbled about her fore foot and gurgled lazily underneath her keel. A half dozen sailors, in Maltese dress, idled about her decks, gazing at the lights of the distant town, talking quietly among themselves. The helmsman glanced from the sea to the stars and the lights, and back again to the stars, and the sea.

It was not strange that such a craft should be making the harbor of Tripoli at nine o'clock on the evening of February 16, 1804. She was one of a type of merchant vessels common in those waters; there were many like her plying up and down the Barbary Coast. She might have been from Italy with olive oil; she might have been from Syracuse with lemons; she might have been from Greece, or Asia Minor. Or she might have been on her way to load fruit for the Sultan of Turkey, or to bring him slaves.

But she was on none of these errands. She had

no wares for the merchants of Tripoli ; no lading for the caravans that went crawling from the coast into the heart of the mighty Desert of Sahara. The half dozen sailors in Maltese dress were not men of Malta. The dim light from the starry sky revealed the clean-cut faces and strong jaws of Americans ; the tongue in which they spoke softly as they stood about the decks was the English tongue. And lurking everywhere in the shadows of the gunwales, behind masts and barrels, indistinct in the darkness, were the forms of crouching men. They were her cargo.

Two of the disguised sailors stood at the bow of the ketch, gazing forward at the lights of Tripoli and the harbor in front of the town. One of them had a pair of marine glasses at his eyes. "Can you make her out yet?" asked the other, presently.

A nod and a quiet "Yes," was the answer.

"Which one is she?" continued the first speaker.

The other handed him the glasses. "The largest of them all," he said. "She lies in the midst of the gunboats, close under the batteries on the castle wall."

For a space there was silence. "A tough place for us to get into, too, I should say," observed the first speaker, at last, taking the glasses from his eyes. "Steve," he went on, and there was a ring of exultation in his tone, "Steve, we're making history to-night !"

A shrug of the shoulders was the only reply.

From the shadow of the bulwarks came a clanging, metallic noise, like the sound of a scabbard striking against the planking. The one who had first been looking through the marine glasses turned sharply about. "Silence there!" he commanded, in a firm note of authority.

A whisper came back: "Aye, aye, sir."

The man left his companion gazing over side and passed aft toward the pilot. As he went, there was a stirring among the shadowy forms under the bulwarks and behind the masts. "Another hour, men," said the man, cheerily. "Stand by."

A dozen "Aye, ayes," and he went on to take a station beside the pilot, a lank Maltese with villainous mustaches whisking in the breeze.

"Signor," murmured the pilot, "I very much afraid we lose the wind, signor. See, it dies away."

"We'll have wind enough," replied the American, with a voice of assurance.

"And the moon," went on the pilot, glancing over his shoulder to where the east was streaked with a creamy flush. "It is rising. We shall be seen. I am not ready to die. It is better that we ——"

"Never mind the moon, Catalano," interrupted the other, sternly. "You bring us into the harbor, and do as I say, and you won't die."

"It is a wild thing that you do, signor, but one can die only once," returned the pilot, twisting his face into an effort at a grin.

The other said nothing more, but walked to the

taffrail and looked out across the harbor into which they were entering. To the southward, mysterious under the half light of the spangled night, the coast of Africa loomed gray and dim in the distance. Beyond the land loom, far off, the first peaks of the desert mountains blurred out of sight among the stars. Ahead of the ketch, at the head of the bay, the white walls and Moorish minarets, the mosques and castles, the ancient batteries of Tripoli rose ghost-like from the hills that stretched their toes into the water. A thousand lazy lights blinked from the town and the ships that rode at anchor on the heaving pulse of the harbor. From the last hill a fringe of low island and rocks reached through the sea to the eastward like a jaw full of broken teeth and munched the rushing waters of the Mediterranean into froth, leaving the harbor quiet behind them.

To the north, league on league, the tumbling waters of the Mediterranean were sprinkled with whitecaps by the fresh breeze that came spinning out of the deep. In all the wild waste of waters there was no sign of man except the tall, trim sails of a brig that fluttered across the swirling gray waves. And over land and sea was the starry peace, the quiet calm of African night. In all the picture there was no hint of war.

But there was war there ; a most astonishing war. The United States, the infant of the west, still struggling through its first tottering steps, had taken arms against the ancient nation of Tripoli ; a

nation that the powers of Europe, even England itself, had not seen fit to quarrel with.

The northern coast of Africa was called the Barbary Coast. Morocco, Tunis, Algeria, and Tripoli were the principal powers of the coast. They were inhabited by a mixed race of Moors, Turks, and Arabs; a wild, fierce people whose creed it was to prey upon Christians. Among them all piracy was a trade, encouraged and controlled by the several governments.

The licensed pirates of the Barbary Coast were called Corsairs. They captured and plundered the ships of Christian nations, and held the ships' crews for ransom. The Christian nations permitted them to do it, and sent large sums of money to free imprisoned sailors. Some of them bribed the Barbary powers with annual tribute, to let their ships alone.

The United States, being young and weak, suffered much from the Corsairs. American ships were robbed; American seamen locked up in Barbary dungeons to await ransom. Our country sent money and presents to all the Barbary powers, year after year. We built and fitted out ships for them. We ran their errands to and from the Sultan of Turkey, to whom they all paid tribute. But the more we yielded, the more they demanded.

Tripoli was the worst offender of them all. The time came at last when we could stand it no longer, and we went to war.

We sent a fleet to the Mediterranean, took some of their ships, and blockaded their towns. We were getting the best of it, when on a day the frigate *Philadelphia*, commanded by Captain Bainbridge, chasing a vessel into the harbor of Tripoli, went on one of the sunken rocks in the jaw full of teeth that ran into the sea, forming one side of the harbor.

The Tripolitans at once put out to attack her in her helpless position. Captain Bainbridge made a valiant defense, but there was no hope. The frigate tipped over until her guns would not train on the enemy, and she could not be got off. He surrendered at last, after he had bored holes in the bottom of the frigate and blocked the pumps, so the enemy could not make use of her. But they succeeded in stopping up the holes, fixing the pumps, and pulling her off the rock into deep water. She was towed into the harbor, and anchored under the guns of the castle batteries.

The loss of the *Philadelphia* was a heavy blow. She was a strong fighting ship, and we had none to spare. When she was pulled up under the guns of the castle and anchored there, she strengthened the defenses of the town. Also, it hurt the pride of the American sailors to have one of their best ships in the hands of the Moslems. But no one could think of anything that could be done to remedy the matter.

One day Captain Bainbridge, a prisoner in Tripoli, wrote a letter to Commodore Preble, who commanded the American fleet, and managed to have it

carried to him. The letter was written with the juice of a lemon, which left no mark. It looked like a piece of blank paper. If the Tripolitans had found it, they would have made nothing of it. But Commodore Preble held it up to the fire when he received it, and the heat brought out the trace of the lemon juice.

The letter suggested that a picked crew of Americans might steal into the harbor of Tripoli by night, in a native vessel, make their way to the *Philadelphia* without being suspected, and either cut her out and sail away with her, or burn her where she lay.

Foolhardy as the plan seemed, there was not an American in the fleet who would not have been glad to be one of the crew if there had been a native vessel that they could use. They could not go in one of their own. They would be known as enemies, and blown out of the water by the guns of the Tripolitans long before they could reach the side of the frigate.

So the affair was in no better state until a day in December, when the schooner *Enterprise*, commanded by Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, captured a Tripolitan ketch, the *Mastico* by name. It was just what they needed. They could fill her with men, and material that would burn easily, sail into the harbor without arousing suspicion, get alongside the *Philadelphia*, capture her, set her afire, and get away before the Tripolitans could know what was

happening. At least, there was a chance that they might be able to do all this with the *Mastico*.

Commodore Preble decided at once to try it. When it became known in the American fleet what was going to be done, volunteers clamored from all sides to be permitted to go with the expedition. Many more offered than could be taken, for the *Mastico* was small.

Because he had been the one to capture the *Mastico* from the enemy, Lieutenant Decatur was given command of the attempt, and the crew of the *Enterprise* was favored. They all wanted to go, but Lieutenant Decatur chose sixty-two men from among them, and made his preparations. Tar barrels, oakum soaked in turpentine, quantities of pitch, were gathered together and stored on the ketch. Provisions and water were put aboard, and she was fitted out with guns, ammunition, cutlasses and boarding-pikes. Six officers from the *Constitution* were permitted to accompany them.

On the ninth of February the *Mastico* set out from Syracuse, accompanied by the brig *Siren*, which was to bring them off after they had burned the *Philadelphia* and escaped—if they should escape. It was night when they arrived off Tripoli. The weather, which had been favorable, changed suddenly, and a strong gale sprang up. They had with them a Maltese pilot, Salvatore Catalano. He told them they would not be able to enter the harbor with such a sea running, but the Americans were not willing to

give up the attempt. Lieutenant Morris and the pilot took some of the sailors in a small boat and went to explore the harbor entrance.

There were two passages into the bay ; one at the extremity of the chain of rocks and islands, called the Eastern Passage, and another between two islands nearer the town, called the Northern Passage. The *Mastico* was then near the Northern Passage. Midshipman Morris soon found that Catalano was right ; no craft could cross in such a sea. He returned to the ketch, and so reported.

The two ships hove to near the entrance, hoping the wind would die down. Instead, it increased in fury, driving the Americans to sea. The next day, and the next, and so for six days, it blew. The men in the *Mastico* had a hard time of it. The ketch was too small for such a large company. There were no accommodations on her. Lieutenant Decatur and three lieutenants and the surgeon occupied the little cabin. Six midshipmen and the pilot slept on some planks laid on top of water casks in the hold. They could not sit upright without knocking their heads on the deck above them. The sailors had only the casks to sleep on. To make things worse, their provisions ran short, and their salt meat spoiled. They all lived on a short allowance of bread and water.

But they were not to be discouraged by hardships. As soon as the weather moderated they made their course for Tripoli again. They reached the coast on the night of the fifteenth, but found that they had

gone too far to the eastward, and were obliged to retire, lest they be discovered by the enemy on the following day.

On the afternoon of the sixteenth they started a third time for Tripoli, reaching the coast after night-fall, five miles to the eastward of the town. They laid their course at once for the Eastern entrance. Finding that they would arrive too early, Lieutenant Decatur put over buckets and other drags to retard the progress of the ketch, and so they sailed until they came to the harbor entrance, where they bade farewell to their friends on the *Siren*, and passed in.

Their plans were well laid. They would steal up to the *Philadelphia*, pretending to be a coasting merchant ship. As soon as they were alongside, they would board. First of all, the entire company would clear the spar-deck of the frigate, and then the gun-deck. That done, the company was to divide. Lieutenant Decatur, with Midshipmen Izard and Rowe with fifteen men, would stand guard on the spar-deck. Lieutenant Lawrence, with Midshipmen Laws and Macdonough and ten men, would fire the berth-deck and the forward storeroom ; Midshipmen Joseph Bainbridge and John Davis with ten men would fire the ward-room and steerage ; and Midshipman Morris with eight men the cockpit and after storeroom. Midshipman Thorne, with the gunner and surgeon and thirteen men, were to remain on the ketch, while Midshipman Anderson was to man the cutter, pick up all small boats that came out, and prevent as

many as possible of the *Philadelphia's* crew from getting ashore and spreading the alarm. "Philadelphia" was the watchword. Strict orders were given against the use of firearms except in cases of the greatest need ; the thing must be done quietly, if it were to be done at all.

And now they were launched on the daring undertaking. The ketch that was creeping through the Eastern Passage, beyond the last sunken rock, on the night of February sixteenth, was the ketch *Mastico*. The sailors in Maltese dress, speaking the English tongue, were officers of the American fleet ; the dark shadows that massed behind gunwale and mast, out of sight, were the sixty-two stout-hearted men of the schooner *Enterprise*, eager to dare death and be revenged on the dusky Turk.

They had known the risk they were running before they started. Now, as they sailed into the harbor, and gazed ahead at the lights of the town and the ships at anchor, it did not seem that they had a chance to get away again ; they could scarcely hope ever to leave that placid bay. On one side was the fringe of broken teeth munching the waters of the Mediterranean. On the other a Moorish battery bristling with guns, like another jaw with sharp teeth, ready to close upon them biting. Deep in the crotch of the two jaws, surrounded by the ships of war of the enemy, her own cannon double shotted and her decks swarming with Tripolitans, was the frigate, the prey they had come to destroy. Close behind her were

the frowning batteries of the city walls and the Bashaw's castle. As soon as they should touch her, the trap would be sprung; the jaw that was the batteries would close down to crunch them against the jaw that was the chain of islands and rocks. A handful against thousands they were; a few against fate. But their stout hearts never failed them. Not one of them all would have changed places with those who had been left safe in the harbor of Syracuse with the American fleet, or who now tumbled about in the *Siren*, outside the harbor.

Least of all would Stephen Decatur have given up what he was about to do. He it was who had been looking through the marine glasses when the ketch entered the Eastern Passage; he it was who had warned the hidden men to silence; who had quieted the fears of Catalano, the Maltese pilot. Now he walked the decks, slowly, calmly, serene, glad.

The moon rose higher, filling the bay with a soft, silvery light. They could not hope to remain long undiscovered. Already they must have been seen ashore, and aboard the frigate. They must depend entirely upon their disguise. A low order passed along the decks; the men crouched closer in their hiding-places. Only the half dozen in Maltese dress, and Catalano, the pilot, remained visible.

The ketch rolled lazily, scarcely heeling before the breeze that was growing fainter and fainter. The lights of the city settled into steady gleams as they drew nearer.

Ten o'clock. The ketch was within hailing distance of the frigate. Lieutenant Decatur stood by the side of Catalano, the pilot. "Head her up for the fore chains," he directed. They must get out of range of the ship's broadside. One blast from those double-shotted guns would send them all to eternity.

"Aye, aye, signor," Catalano replied, and the ketch swung away.

The forms of men appeared along the frigate's rail. Others came, to stare idly at the stranger, drifting into haven. They spoke among themselves, discussing her.

A hail from the frigate. "What ship is that?" in the jargon of those parts; half Italian, half Moorish.

The men lurking in the shadows of the ketch's gunwales and masts tightened their grips on cutlass scabbard and boarding-pike. They could see only the face of their commander and watched it for a sign. It was calm and serene. The men lay still, waiting.

Decatur whispered to Catalano, and the pilot answered the hail. "By Allah and the prophet," he whined, in their tongue, "we have had a sore time of it. For seven days we have tossed about on waves that rolled mountain high upon us. Never have I seen such waves. We are weary and sick. We have lost our anchors. We would make fast to your chains until we can find others."

More dark faces ranged along the gunwales of

the frigate, and peered through her ports, to look at the unfortunate stranger.

"Who are you?" demanded the voice that had hailed.

Catalano, prompted by the American at his elbow, made further answer. "We are unhappy men that live by the sea," he said. "We have stuffs aboard for merchants of your town, and we would make fast to your chains, having lost our anchors."

"What brig is that in the offing?" came from the *Philadelphia*. They had caught sight of the *Siren*, and were anxious, fearing the Americans.

The reply had been prepared. "That is the *Transfer*," Catalano told them. The *Transfer* was a British brig that had been bought by the Bashaw of Tripoli at Malta, and was daily expected. The Turks were satisfied.

The pilot, alert to gain the fore chains of the frigate, chattered and gossiped with those on her decks, amusing them with the latest tales from eastern ports, and news of the American fleet. The listening Turks stared over at the moonlit deck of the ketch, seeing nothing but six Maltese sailors.

Closer, closer, on the breath of the dying breeze, the ketch crept toward the chains of the frigate. A moment more, and then . . . The men lying hidden on the deck of the small craft watched the face of their commander, waiting for the order to board. Their tight fingers whitened about the hafts of their boarding-pikes and the hilts of their cutlasses.

The *Mastico* hesitated ; she hung in the water ; she stopped. Her sails fell loose, flapped for an instant, and filled from the other side. A cat-paw of wind, puffing from the land, had caught them. The water gurgled under her stern, striking her with little spatting waves. Slowly she began to fall back ; to make sternway, drifting under all the guns of the heavy broadside, not twenty yards away. If they should be discovered now, there would be an end of it all, at once. Not all the courage in the world could save them from immediate destruction.

The hidden men, aware of the change in course, watched the face of their commander. It was calm as a summer's evening. "Lower a boat," he ordered, softly. "Carry a line to the ring-bolt in the bows of the frigate. Make it fast."

There was no need to tell them to hurry. Two sailors in their Maltese dress sprang into the lowered boat, took a line, and bent to the oars. They rowed with a show of indifference, lest they warn the enemy, singing snatches of an Italian song they had picked up in their wanderings.

As they rowed, another boat appeared from beneath the stern of the *Philadelphia*, making toward the ketch. It bore a hawser. The Turk would have had them make fast to his stern.

The two in the ketch's boat, tying their line to the ring-bolt of the *Philadelphia*, saw the other coming, and understood. If it should reach the *Mastico*, the

Turks in her would see the hidden crew ; the alarm would be given, and the end would come swiftly.

Quickly the two made fast their line, and bent to their oars again. With strong stroke they rowed back to intercept the frigate's boat. They reached her before she gained the ketch, and took the hawser she carried, telling her crew, in broken Italian, that they would carry it to the ketch. The Turks, glad to be relieved of the task, turned back. That danger was past.

The line that was fast to the frigate's ring-bolt was passed along the ketch's deck. From the shadows of the gunwales, from behind masts and barrels, hairy hands reached out and grasped it. The hidden crew hauled in with a steady pull. The ketch hung for a moment, checked her sternway, and forged ahead. Twenty yards, fifteen, ten, from the frigate's chains. Another minute and they would be in reach.

Suddenly there was a cry of anger from the *Philadelphia*. "Dog !" roared a voice ; the voice that had first hailed ; "you have told us lies. Your anchors are still on your decks ! What trick is this ?"

Catalano turned pale, but Decatur was undisturbed. With a swift motion of the hand he signaled his hidden crew to remain quiet, and to pull more stoutly. They obeyed.

A man was running down the chains of the frigate. A cutlass gleamed in his hand. He reached the line

that held the ketch, and hewed at it with his blade, stroke on stroke. Above, on the decks of the frigate, excitement was running higher. The Turks were beginning to suspect some trick.

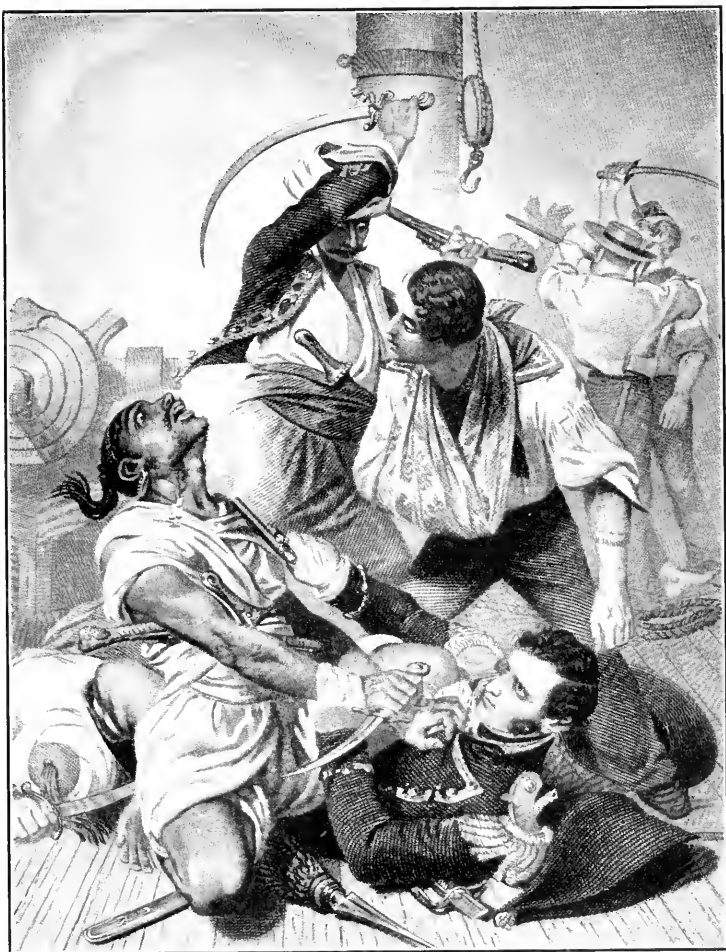
The line still held, and the ketch still forged ahead.

A Tripolitan, peering farther over the side of the frigate, caught sight of the hairy arms reaching out of the shadows to pull on the line ; he saw the shadows bulked behind the bulwarks. "Amerikano !" he shrieked. "Amerikano!! Amerikano!!!"

"Amerikano! Amerikano!" The scream rang through the frigate, taken up by scores of voices. There was a great scurrying of feet ; a rushing to and fro of the astonished enemy. These devil Amerikanos ! What would they not do ?

There was no longer need for the Americans to conceal themselves. They leaped to their feet and pulled on the line that still held them to the frigate's bow. The man with the cutlass hacked at it as they pulled. It parted at last, but the ketch already had gained enough headway. She drifted alongside, surged forward, reached the chains and was made fast to them with the twist of another rope.

And now the time had come. In utter silence, save for the heavy breathing and the occasional clank of their arms, the Americans rushed for the chains of the *Philadelphia*. Before the amazed Moslems could believe what was happening, they were swarming over her gunwales and through her ports.



DECATUR CAPTURING THE PHILADELPHIA

Midshipman Morris was the first aboard. Lieutenant Decatur, leaping into the main chain plates, slipped and lost a step. Midshipman Laws, clambering through a port, caught the butt of his pistol and had to stop to free himself. But Morris was not long alone. A rush of men was at his side. It was as though they took form out of the air, so swiftly they appeared.

The Tripolitans were dismayed. Some stopped to strike back, but most of them rushed to the other side of the vessel and leaped overboard. In a moment the quarter-deck was cleared. Forming solidly, the Americans charged forward, sweeping the Tripolitans off the forecastle into the sea. "No prisoners," was the order.

The Tripolitans below, hearing the scuffling on deck, and the screams, ran up to learn what it all meant, and ran howling back again to hide in the hold like rats, or leaped over the side.

The decks were free. The Americans poured below. In many an odd corner and dark hole of the ship was fierce encounter, but it was not for long. Ten minutes after the first startled cry of "Amerikano" rang out on the African night the Americans were in complete possession of the frigate, and the waters about were specked with the bobbing heads of Turks and Moors and Arabs, swimming for their lives.

Without delay the conquerors set about firing the ship. Commodore Preble had given strict orders

against any attempt to bring the *Philadelphia* out, because of the danger, or there might have been another ending to this story. Oakum, soaked in turpentine, pitch, staves of tar barrels, were quickly handed up from the ketch and stowed about the frigate by the different parties of the crew, as had been planned. Matches were applied, and the fire leaped into life in half a dozen places.

By the time the last firing party reached the decks again, flames were snapping through gun-ports and hatchways. Black smoke rolled up; beneath the planking underfoot was a growing roar of flame; a hissing and crackling. The growling fire fiend was already smacking his lips.

There was now no chance that the Tripolitans could return and save the vessel from destruction. The fire had too good a start. Making sure of this, Lieutenant Decatur ordered his men back to the ketch. He was the last to leave; the *Mastico* had already swung off when he quitted the *Philadelphia*; he had to leap into the ketch's rigging from the bulwarks of the frigate.

But the danger was not ended. There was no wind, and the *Mastico* clung alongside. The crew shoved off with sweeps and poles, but the ketch's boom was afoul, and her jigger sail flapped against the hot sides of the frigate's quarter. Red flames tongued out at her from port-holes, stretching to reach her canvas; they whipped into her tiny cabin, where all her ammunition was stored, covered only

by a tarpaulin. And she would not clear herself from the tall sides of her victim.

For precious moments the Americans could not find what held her. Some one discovered at last that it was the hawser that the Tripolitans had sent aboard in their own small boat. It had been made fast to the stern of the ketch, and had been forgotten. A dozen cutlasses whirled through the red air; the hawser fell apart, and the *Mastico* drifted from the doomed ship. The men took to their long sweeps and rowed away. As they rowed, Decatur sent up a rocket as a signal to the *Siren* that the work was done.

The flames had gained the frigate's deck. They rolled in huge balls along the planking. Ribbons of blaze uncurled out of port-holes, and wrapped themselves along her sides. A ruddy glare spread over the water; a torrent of smoke streamed upward, lined with the flare of the flames, and shot with sparks.

The Americans rowed heartily. Soon the double-shotted guns of the frigate would become heated and go off; soon the boats and batteries of the Tripolitans would open on the little ketch, a fair mark in the pinkened waters of the bay.

Flames ran up the frigate's masts, curving over at the tops like fiery capitals on fiery columns. Sputtering serpents of fire twisted along shrouds and rigging, writhing through the rushing air. Strands of burning cordage squirmed and swung in the hot

draught. Firebrands were tossed high on the swirling blast, to fall sizzling into the sea; black smoke billowed into the sky.

The flare of the fire lay tawny over the heaving waters of the bay. The gunboats of the Tripolitans stood out on the red flood; the batteries, fringed with black guns, blinked; the white walls of Tripoli stared blankly at the astounding spectacle. People rushed bewildered from their houses into the narrow, steep streets. Soldiers ran up and down the ramparts, yelling, gesticulating. And the little ketch, filled with the handful of brave men who had created the commotion, moved slowly across the midst of the brilliant harbor, a fair mark for every gunner.

"Boom!" A gunboat spoke to them, and a spurt of water leaped into the light a dozen fathoms away. The spray of it fell back in ruby drops. Another shot, and another. All the gunboats were pounding away, and the land batteries were coming into action. The air shook with the cannonading; the sea was lashed by the falling shot.

The men pulled at their sweeps. Not a shot struck them. The enemy were too excited to fire accurately. At the stern of the ketch a group of officers watched the spectacle, paying no attention to the shot and shell that showered about them. A little apart from them Decatur stood in silence, gazing wistfully at the seething mass of fire that had been the proud frigate *Philadelphia*.

A flash, brighter than flame, burst from the midst

of the fire. A shower of sparks flew upward through the ascending rush of flame. The roar of a gun came across the waters from the frigate. Another flash ; another shower of sparks ; another roar of a gun. Another, and another. The guns of the *Philadelphia*, becoming heated, were going off, one by one.

Higher and higher, more and more madly, the billows of fire leaped from the burning vessel. The shot from the gunboats and the batteries fell farther and farther behind. The men at the sweeps, now near the Northern Passage, rested on their sweeps for a last look.

Suddenly the mass of flame was rent asunder. There was a mighty puff of fire and smoke, a deafening burst of sound rushed across the bay, and the *Philadelphia* leaped into a myriad burning fragments. The magazine had exploded.

The light died out ; the swirling smoke and flame sucked upward, and spread across the astonished sky. Darkness descended ; the pale light of the moon was nothing after the brilliancy of the burning ship.

There was the splashing of fragments falling back into the sea. A dozen bulging swells from where the ship had been caught and tossed the *Mastico*, and passed on to be lost in the waste waters of the sea. This was all. The thing was done. The *Philadelphia* was no more.

The men on the *Mastico* bent to their sweeps

again in silence, and picked their way to where the boats of the *Siren* lay waiting for them, in answer to their signal rocket. It had become a story to be told through the years ; a story that will quicken the hearts and set blood bounding through the veins of youth as long as valor and victory are dear to the hearts of Americans.

Admiral Nelson, hearing of the deed, pronounced it the most daring of the age. Lieutenant Decatur was promoted to a captaincy, and all the officers concerned received higher rank. Not one of the brave men was lost.

Twoscore years later, in 1844, when Captain Breese of the *Cumberland* visited Tripoli he caused a portion of the wreck to be raised, and had the water-logged timbers made into souvenirs. That is all that remains of the frigate *Philadelphia*, excepting the story.

CHAPTER IV

“DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!”

CAPTAIN JAMES LAWRENCE laid down his knife and fork and looked across the breakfast table at the servant who had just spoken. “A British frigate, did you say?” he asked, briskly.

“Yes, sir. A big British frigate, sir. In the offing, sir.”

“A frigate? You are certain of that? Not the *Tenedos*, line-of-battle ship?”

“No, sir. A frigate, sir. The sentry at the fort reported it a frigate.”

“And it is alone?” continued Captain Lawrence.

“Quite alone, sir. There is no other sail in sight. That is to say, no other ship-of-war, sir.”

Captain Lawrence exchanged glances with the friend with whom he was breakfasting ashore in the city of Boston. “You will have to excuse me, if you will be so good,” he said, earnestly. “I shall have to go aboard at once.”

The friend showed concern. “What do you understand it to mean?” he asked.

“I take it to mean that Captain Broke has sent the *Tenedos* away from the station and takes this means of challenging the *Chesapeake* to come out

and fight," returned Captain Lawrence, arising from the table. His two sons, who were breakfasting with him, arose also, in high excitement, and stood staring proudly at their father. It was something to have such a father! It was something to know that the entire country acclaimed him a hero, and it was something to know that he was entitled to the fame and honor that had come to him. For had he not, as captain of the *Hornet*, attacked and captured the British ship *Peacock*? And had he not been second in command of the *Intrepid*, that time Decatur stole into the harbor of Tripoli and burned the frigate *Philadelphia*, which had fallen into the hands of the Tripolitans?

His friend got up from the table and laid an affectionate hand on Captain Lawrence's wrist. There was none who knew the man who did not love him. A great, strong, sturdy hero he was; a man of the finest grain, courteous, well-mannered, gentle, the core of chivalry; tall, handsome, with a fine head borne finely on broad shoulders.

"Captain Lawrence," his friend began, "are you going out to meet the *Shannon*?"

"Without delay," returned the officer, emphatically, moving toward the door.

His friend delayed him. "Captain Lawrence," he said, "I can understand your feelings in the matter, and I can only applaud them. It would be trying indeed for you to remain safely in the harbor with an enemy of equal strength flaunting his flag

in front of you. But there are many things to be thought of. You are scarcely ready for such an encounter. Your crew is raw, and many of them are green hands. Many more of them are foreigners; some of them are even Englishmen. You do not know them, and they do not know you. You have never sailed with the officers who are under you, and you have never sailed in the *Chesapeake*. It is well known that she is not a fortunate ship; it would be well for you to know her and your crew better before you sail against so formidable an enemy, for the *Shannon* is reputed to be the best vessel of her class in the British navy."

"Which is another reason why I should proceed at once to meet her," answered Captain Lawrence, with a kindling eye. The thought of the contest was already stirring his blood; he saw the honor and renown that would come to him from success in the encounter.

"But there are many things to be thought of," repeated his friend. "Your reputation as a man of courage is in no danger; no one could think that you declined to fight from fear. It would be understood that it was only a sane caution on your part if you delayed meeting the enemy until you were better prepared."

Captain Lawrence gently removed his friend's detaining hand from his wrist, and looked him proudly between the eyes. "Once I lay off the harbor of San Salvador, Brazil, in the *Hornet*," he said.

"Inside the harbor was the British ship *Bonne Citoyen*. I sent in a challenge, asking her commander to come out and fight. He refused to do so. I know what my men thought of him, I know what his men thought of him, I know what I thought of him, and still think of him. He was a coward. I would not have my men, or the men of the *Shannon*, or Captain Broke, or my countrymen, think that I am a coward. If I knew that I was taking my vessel into certain destruction I would go without hesitation. But it is not so; the *Chesapeake* as she is is a match for any vessel in her class. You are very good to warn me. I receive your advice as it is given, in the spirit of friendship, but I cannot follow it. Good-bye. Commend me to my friends and bear a message for me to my wife. Tell her what has taken place between us. She will understand, and be glad that it is so."

His young sons slipped to his side, each of them taking a hand. He turned toward the door and left the house, making haste toward the water-front.

It was the first of June, 1813. For the first time in several days the sky was clear, and the sun bright. It sparkled and danced over the waves of Boston harbor, ruffled under a pleasant breeze. Out in the harbor lay the *Chesapeake*, the Monday wash of her men hanging from rope and rigging. Far out at the mouth of the harbor gleamed the towering white sails of the British frigate, sailing to and fro in defiance, hull down below the horizon.

Loyal officers on the wharf tried to dissuade him from going out to meet her. "Wait," they urged. He shook his head. He kissed his children with a stout heart, patted them on the head, laughed away their tears of pride and anxiety, stepped into a boat, and was rowed to the *Chesapeake*.

His friend was right when he had called the *Chesapeake* an unfortunate ship. It was the *Chesapeake* that had been overhauled and fired upon by the British ship *Leopard* in Chesapeake Bay six years before. The captain of the British ship, maintaining that some of the crew of the *Chesapeake* were deserters from the English navy, had demanded their return. When this had been refused, he had opened fire. The American ship was in no condition to make reply, not having expected an encounter with an enemy. She was just putting to sea; her ropes were about her decks; there had been no time to make things shipshape. There were no matches for the guns; she would have been obliged to haul down her flag without answering with one shot if Lieutenant William Henry Allen, in command of the guns of the second division, had not taken a live coal from the galley fire in his naked fingers and touched one off. The flag was hauled down, after the *Chesapeake* had been under the fire of the *Leopard's* guns for fifteen minutes, and the American sailors had the humiliation of seeing four of their crew taken off by the British ship.

In the war with Great Britain which soon after-

ward followed, the *Chesapeake* had been unlucky. She had come to Boston, where she now was, from a cruise of four months in which she had captured only a few worthless prizes, while her sister ships were striking heavy blows at the honor of England on the seas, and were gaining for themselves fame and fortune. As soon as she got back to Boston she was blockaded, together with the *Constitution*, which was undergoing repairs, by the British line-of-battle ship *Tenedos*, and the frigate *Shannon*.

Captain Lawrence, returning from his victory in the *Hornet* over the *Peacock*, had asked for the *Constitution*, and had been given command of it, but the order had been withdrawn, and he was placed in charge of the *Chesapeake*. He was not pleased, but was too patriotic and loyal to complain, and went to Boston to assume command. He had been in charge of the ship for ten days ; ten days full of trouble and annoyances.

His greatest trouble was with the crew. Your sailor is a superstitious fellow, and the *Chesapeake* was known among them as a hoodoo ship. They would not sail on her. There was another reason why sailors were hard to get. All the good men were shipping in privateersmen. The chances for prize money were greater on board a privateer, and the men did not have to submit to the rigid discipline of the naval officers. Because of the difficulty in getting good hands, the riffraff of the water-front was shipped aboard the frigate, and a number of

farmer lads were taken ; good enough lads in themselves, but wholly unfit for immediate service at sea.

The crew, when it was finally filled, consisted of men of all races and colors. Many of them were Portuguese, and, as Lawrence's friend had said, there were Englishmen in the crew. And to make bad matters worse, the old sailors, who had been aboard in her recent cruise, were grumbling and sullen over the distribution of prize money. You must remember that when a war-ship takes a prize, the money the prize brings is divided between the officers and men. These men thought they had been cheated ; and when a sailor thinks he has been cheated he is a hard customer to handle.

And worst of all, the officers on the *Chesapeake* were new in their positions, and, with one exception, new to the vessel. First Lieutenant Ludlow had sailed with her as third lieutenant in her recent cruise. The third and fourth lieutenants had just been promoted from midshipmen, and were not only not familiar with the *Chesapeake*, but with their duties in general.

Everything was in confusion when Captain Lawrence reached the deck of the *Chesapeake*. Many men of the crew were just coming aboard, some of them for the first time. Their hammocks littered the decks. Others of the crew stood about in idle groups, not knowing their duties, or not caring to tend to them. On the brink of an encounter which he knew must be a fierce one, the sight must

have been discouraging to the brave man. But he bore himself above it, trusting to his own valor and the luck and pluck of the navy to bear him through.

Going to his cabin he wrote a note to the secretary of the navy. "An English frigate is now in sight from my deck," he wrote. "I have sent a pilot boat out to reconnoitre ; and, should she be alone, I am in hopes to give a good account of her before night. My crew appear to be in fine spirits, and I hope they will do their duty."

Whether he was trying to make himself believe that, or whether he wrote the words as a matter of form, we cannot know. Neither can we know what he would have written, or what he would have done, if he could have overheard the talk that was going forward among this same crew at the moment he was writing.

One group was standing under the starboard gangway near the fore-castle. The gangways were long platforms that ran from the level of the quarter-deck, which was higher than the main-deck and extended as far forward as the mainmast, to the fore-castle, also higher than the main-deck, at the level of the quarter-deck. There was one on each side of the ship, affording a passage from the quarter-deck to the fore-castle without making it necessary to descend to the main-deck and climb up again.

This group was under the gangway on the star-board side, near the fore-castle. They were a dozen men ; Portuguese, Englishmen, some good-for-noth-

ing Americans, and a negro or two. They were all crowding about a Portuguese, the boatswain's mate. He was a villainous-looking rogue, with long mustachios, a hooked nose, and an ugly scar over his wicked eyes. He was one of the few aboard who had been on the vessel during its recent voyage; they were listening to his complaints.

"This is a bad luck shep," he was growling. "We make long voyage in it before, and come on one, two, tree leetle shep, which we take, but it was not'ing. Poof! They were scarvy shep. So leetle money as that!" He snapped his fingers in the air to show his contempt for the prizes they had taken. "We sail tree, four mont', and fine not'ing. She be slow in the water like a hog. She wallow in the waves; she no good sailer. T'en we come home, and dey no give us our money. We show t'em, for no give us our money. They t'ink we fight for t'em like brave mans when t'ey no give us our money! Bah! We show t'em!"

The others muttered a chorus to his growls, although not many of them had the same cause of complaint. They scowled up and down the decks, letting their ugly glances loiter about the quarter-deck.

"T'ey t'ink we let our blood run for t'at we lof t'em," went on the Portuguese. "Ah, yes, we lof t'em. We lof t'em so much t'at we will fight and keel ourselves; oh, yes!"

The others grinned at his sarcasm.

"We have no chance against this *Shannon*," spoke up an English sailor. "I know what she is. A shipmate of mine was in her. That man Broke is the best fighter they have. And shoot, man! Why, they can hit a cask afloat in the water in any sea. My shipmate told me that they used to throw over a cask and fire at it, with extra rations of grog for the gun crew that hit it first. It never lasted many minutes in the water, let me tell you, and what chance have we against that ship? 'Tis the best in their navy, I'm telling you; the best manned, and the best drilled. Why, most of his men have been with Broke for going on seven years." Which was quite true; he and his crew worked like a clock together.

"We're goin' to Halifax, that's where we're goin'!" piped a negro. "A friend ob mine who lived all ob his life in Nova Scotia, he done call out to me, jes' as we was leavin' the dock to come aboard: 'Good-bye, George,' says he. 'You's gwine to Halifax afore you comes back to Bostaing. Gib my lub to requirin' friends and tell 'em Ah berry well.' Dey all knowed we was goin' dere, fast enough, but dey didn't like nohow to be told it, dose people on the dock, and dey went foh ma friend good. I allow he got pretty bad messed up afore dey let him go."

The Portuguese boatswain's mate shrugged his shoulders and pulled at his long mustachios, to show how little he cared whether they went to Halifax or some other place. At the moment there was a

hubbub under the forecastle, and a gang of drunken sailors came reeling out, driven by one of the lieutenants. They had been ashore drinking their good-byes. The Portuguese slipped up to them and whispered something in Portuguese. The men turned on the lieutenant, who was chasing them out of the forecastle, with ugly snarls. He faced them, cutlass in hand. The boatswain's mate slunk away, and the gang succumbed to the show of force on the part of the officer. But it was not a pretty thing to have happen on the verge of a stubborn engagement with the best vessel the enemy boasted.

Twelve o'clock. Captain Lawrence came upon the quarter-deck, trumpet in hand, and issued an order. The boatswain's whistle sounded; the sailors came tumbling to the mainmast, not knowing quite what was expected of them. The fourth lieutenant went forward with some of them. Presently there was the sound of a sailors' chantey, and the anchor windlass began to wheeze and squeal as the men hove up on the anchor. Others were sent aloft to unfurl the sails; others stood by halliards and sheets.

The foretopsail broke out and was sheeted home. The maintopsail followed. One by one the other sails blossomed on the bare masts, the *Chesapeake* heeled gently, and began to move through the water. Captain Lawrence, standing on the quarter-deck, gazing far across the waters to where the white sails of the enemy showed over the sea, called the men to the mainmast. As they mustered, he whispered to

a quartermaster at his elbow ; the man jerked a signal halliard, and a pennant, that had hung in a bunch at the main truck, burst into the breeze. It bore, in large letters, the legend: " Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," the motto of the American navy and the cry of the war.

The Portuguese boatswain's mate, shifting about on the edge of the mustered men, saw the signal pennant and sneered. " Ah, yes, we haf our sailors' rights," he snarled. " We haf t'e right to sail and fight and keel ourselves, and t'ey have the right to all the money we win for t'em with our fighting and our dying ! "

Captain Lawrence turned to the men and began to speak to them, calling upon them to do their duty and promising them a ready victory. He had not gone far when certain coughings and hawkings that had commenced when he began grew into sly cat-calls and impudent interruptions. Lawrence paused and glanced sternly down among the men until the disturbance ceased. If he had not known before what manner of crew he had he must have known it now.

He was beginning again when the Portuguese boatswain's mate called out from the skirts of the crowd. " Where ees our prize money ? " he shouted.

" That is something I know little about," returned Captain Lawrence, quietly. " If there is any money due any of you which, through a misunderstanding, you have not obtained, you may depend upon the

honesty and honor of the government to pay it to you in good time."

"We want it now!" "Where is our money!" came from half a dozen, emboldened by the Portuguese.

"You ask us to fight for you, and then, if we are not keeled, you cheat us of the money we earn," cried the surly boatswain's mate, closing his eyes to slits and showing his teeth beneath his heavy mustachios.

The pride of the man on the quarter-deck would not suffer his country to be accused of cheating its sailors. Captain Lawrence turned to the purser. "Take the men aside and make out checks for them," he ordered.

How different from the men of the *Hornet*, which he had commanded, or the *Constitution*, which he had hoped to command! Quarreling over a bit of money when they were sailing out to meet an enemy and fight for the honor of their flag! Even when he called the attention of the crew to the flag bearing the motto: "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," as he concluded his speech to them, there was only the faintest sort of a cheer, and they went back to their stations sullen and listless.

A feeling of heaviness spread through the ship. The men leaned against their guns, silent, or grumbling. The officers of the ship, going about on their business, walked with lagging feet and stooping shoulders, as though bearing a burden. There was no buoyancy, no joy, as there was wont to be when

an American vessel went into action against the British with the emblem, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," flying from the masthead. Even Captain Lawrence, standing in the majesty of his towering muscular frame and fine dignity on the quarter-deck, or passing among the men with words of confidence and cheer, seemed to feel the heaviness. His voice lacked ring; his eye was not as confident in its flashing as it had been that day the *Hornet* was about to fire into the *Peacock*. "*Peacock* them, boys, *Peacock* them," he said, trying to throw enthusiasm into his words; but they fell flat on ears that cared not what he said.

Slowly the beautiful ship clipped out of the harbor across the sparkling sea. In her wake came a fleet of smaller craft, laden with people from Boston, anxious to see the fight. All along the shore, in the direction of Marblehead and Salem, people were hurrying afoot and in vehicles, to catch what glimpse they could of it. They had long been fretful under the blockade the British ships had held in front of their port; they rejoiced in this blow that was to be struck to loosen the hold of the English fleet.

Four o'clock, and the *Chesapeake* was forging through the waters in the direction of the *Shannon*. Now the hull of the *Shannon* stood out clear against the waters of the sea; her fringe of black guns was distinct against the band of yellow which passed all along the length of the English ship where her gun-ports were.

“Boom.” A gun on the windward side of the *Chesapeake* spoke out, telling the Englishmen that they were ready for the fight. The *Chesapeake* was to the windward of her enemy, bearing down rapidly. She might have crossed her stern and raked; Captain Broke feared that manœuvre; but Captain Lawrence disdained to take such an advantage. He would fight it out, yard-arm to yard-arm, and might the best man win!

The *Shannon* was waiting under topsails and jib. The *Chesapeake* drew abreast. The men were at the guns; the sailors and marines in the tops. Slowly the bow of the American ship forged ahead; now her bowsprit was even with the stern of the enemy; now the ships were beginning to overlap, fifty yards apart. The shadow of the *Chesapeake's* sails, cast by the setting sun, lay across the decks of the *Shannon*.

A flash from the sternmost gun on the Englishman, a boom, and a shot came rushing across the narrow strip of water that was between them. Before it struck the *Chesapeake*, another gun, next forward to the first, had spoken, and so they went, one after the other, as the advancing vessel came within range.

The guns had been loaded alternately with two round shot and a keg containing one hundred and fifty musket balls, and a round shot with a double-headed shot on top of it. The destruction from the first fire was appalling. Captain Lawrence, glanc-

ing along his decks, saw a cloud of splinters, hammocks, and other wreckage sweep across, mingled with men, killed and wounded.

Something struck him a sharp blow in the leg, above the knee, leaving a dull, beating pain where it had hit. He looked down and saw the blood come sopping through his breeches about a hole. One of the musket balls had found him. His leg grew weak in an instant, but he leaned against the companionway and watched the fight, giving directions.

They told him that his sailing-master had been killed by the first broadside. He saw Lieutenant Ludlow reeling, and saw two spots of blood on his clothing; he saw wounded men crawling and being dragged below to the cockpit.

The *Chesapeake* answered with a roar. Both ships were in full action. The air was beaten with loud sound. The small boats that had come out to see the fight, cruising about at a distance, saw the first few flashes, and then a dense cloud of yellow smoke concealed all but the tops of the masts, where the sails hung loosely as the two ships surged side by side in mortal combat.

Well did the cask-shooting of the British gunners stand them in stead that day. Their shots tore through the sides of the *Chesapeake*, sweeping men from their guns, tearing them, hurling them across the decks before a swarm of spinning slivers. The ends of severed ropes came swirling down from the

rigging, to hang in long, swinging shreds, useless, tangling with the rigging that still stood.

The American gunners were not all sullen and laggards. They fired as fast and as hard as they could in the face of the storm that was sweeping destruction down upon them, and their shots were not without effect. One of them, passing in at a gun-port on the *Shannon*, disabled the gun, broke the leg of the captain of the gun, and narrowly missed Captain Broke, who was stepping over the gun chain at the moment.

The speed at which the *Chesapeake* had come up was beginning to carry her ahead of the enemy. Captain Lawrence, leaning against the companion-way to ease his wounded leg, saw it, and ordered the sails to be backed. But the sailing-master was dead, and the rigging was shot so badly that the manœuvre could not be carried out. In the attempt the vessel swung into the wind, and went drifting down toward the *Shannon*, stern on.

Now the English poured in a murderous fire. The stern guns on the *Shannon* raked the *Chesapeake* from stern to stem; the forward guns cross-fired her deck. In the tops English marines, armed with muskets and hand-grenades, picked off the gunners. Three men had already been shot from the wheel of the *Chesapeake*.

The two vessels came together, the stern of the *Chesapeake* grinding against the sides of the *Shannon* just forward of the main chains. The stern-ports

of the American were beaten in ; men were deserting her guns. The Portuguese boatswain's mate was nowhere to be seen.

"Call up the boarders !" cried Captain Lawrence, seeing a chance to carry the enemy by storm when the two vessels came together.

The British marines were pouring in a killing hail of lead from their ranged muskets.

Where was the bugler, to sound the bugle call for the boarders? Midshipmen ran to look for him ; it was the negro George for whom they searched ; he who had been in the group with the Portuguese before the fight, whose friend had told him he was going to Halifax.

They did not find him. At a word from Lawrence, midshipmen and lieutenants ran to call up the boarders by word of mouth. Running here and there, they found George, the negro bugler, hiding under the stern of the launch. They dragged him out ; he was pale with fear. "Sound the call !" they cried.

He put the bugle to his lips, and blew, but only a feeble sound came from the instrument ; the man was too frightened to blow it.

Lieutenant Law of the *Shannon's* marines, looking through a rift in the smoke, saw the white vest of Captain Lawrence, where he leaned against the companionway, waiting for the boarders to come up that he might lead them aboard the enemy. He snatched a gun from a marine, aimed it, and fired.



"DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!"

Captain Lawrence crumpled up and fell to the deck. Lieutenant Ludlow, mortally hurt, saw him sink, and sobbed.

Strong arms raised the commander. He was shot through the abdomen. His arms hung limp as they carried him below ; his head swung from side to side with their steps.

The fire slackened. Captain Lawrence raised his lids ; his lips moved. “Tell the men to fire faster !” he said, in steady voice. “Fight her till she sinks or strikes. Don’t give up the ship !”

Here and there men on the decks of the *Chesapeake* were sneaking away and stealing down below, out of the murderous draft of iron and lead that was rushing through the ship. There was no one forward to command the gunners ; their guns ceased speaking. There was no one anywhere to give command. Everything was helter-skelter.

They laid the stricken American on a cot in the cockpit ; surgeons hovered over him, knowing from the first that he was beyond aid. His face was pale, but his jaw was set firmly. “Keep the guns going !” he ordered. “Fight her till she strikes or sinks. Don’t give up the ship !”

Boatswain Stevens, of the *Shannon*, appeared at her main chains with lashings. He leaned out, and cast them about a stanchion on the *Chesapeake*. A half dozen cutlasses bit deeply into his arm. He made the lashings fast ; his arm fell into the sea as he finished lashing the vessels together.

The flukes of an anchor hanging from the sides of the *Shannon* caught in one of the *Chesapeake's* ports; the two vessels were bound tight.

"Don't give up the ship!" rang the voice of Captain Lawrence, down in the cockpit. The pain from his wound was creeping over him; his senses were swinging out of him. "Don't give up the ship! Don't give up the ship!" he murmured.

Captain Broke, seeing the confusion on board the American vessel, and perceiving that the enemy was not going to board, ordered the marines to follow him. A hand-grenade, dropped by a man from the yard-arm of the *Shannon*, fell in an arm chest on the quarter-deck of the *Chesapeake*. There was a flash, a report, and the air was filled with flying débris. The Americans on the quarter-deck, having no one to lead them, scattered. The Portuguese boatswain's mate beckoned them below.

"Boarders away!" cried Captain Broke, and leaped aboard, followed by a handful of marines.

Those below did not know the enemy had boarded; they did not know anything that was going on above. The ship was in disorder; it was a body without brains.

Some few turned to meet the advancing Englishmen. But the crew for the most part ran from their guns, and sought safety below. Leading them to refuge was the Portuguese boatswain's mate. "We'll teach t'em to cheat us of our prize money!" he snarled, as he ran away.

Bright through the air flashed the sword of the English captain. Mr. Livermore, chaplain of the *Chesapeake*, stood almost alone to oppose him. He advanced, fire flashing from his eyes. In his hand was a pistol. He aimed it at Broke, and pulled. The ball went wild. In the next instant, the Toledo blade in the hands of the Englishman described a flashing arc through the air and descended toward the chaplain's head. He raised an arm and fended it off, but the steel bit deeply, and he reeled to the deck under the force of the blow.

The noise of scuffling feet came to the ears of the American captain, lying mortally wounded in the cockpit. “Fire faster!” he said faintly. “Don't give up the ship!”

Some one told him that the enemy had carried the quarter-deck. He struggled to raise himself on the bed, but sank back, shot with a sudden increase of pain. “Then the officers of the deck haven't toed the mark!” he cried, his voice stronger for a moment. “The *Shannon* was whipped when I left the deck!” His eyelids fluttered and closed. He twisted with a spasm of pain, and sank back, relaxing. “Don't give up the ship!” he murmured. “Don't give up the ship!” The anguish had stripped the sense from his body but the thoughts of his soul were fixed on that: “Don't give up the ship!”

Captain Broke, at the head of his men, rushed forward along the main-deck and gangways. The American marines fought back, but were pushed

away. Up in the foretop of the *Chesapeake* a band of them were firing down on the boarders. A cannon on the *Shannon*, loaded with cannister, was lifted and shouted out at them. The murderous charge shrieked through the air, and the top was thenceforth silent.

"Don't give up the ship!" murmured the voice of the stricken man in the cockpit.

Back in Boston, two young lads were listening to the distant muffled roar of the fight, thinking of their father as they had last seen him, tall, straight, clear-eyed, brave, noble, a father to be proud of. They fancied that they saw him now on the quarter-deck, guiding the ship to victory; they saw the humbled English captain handing him his sword in token of surrender. They heard in their thoughts the hurrahs of the American sailors as the British flag came down from the ensign-gaff. With hands clutching each other, they dreamed of the honor and glory that their father would bring back.

And back in Boston the man with whom Captain Lawrence had eaten breakfast that morning was opening a message that had just come, addressed to the captain. It had been brought there from Captain Broke by an American sailor who had been a prisoner on the *Shannon*, and had been liberated to carry the message. "As the *Chesapeake* now appears to be ready for sea," the letter read, "I request you will do me the honor to meet the *Shannon* with her, ship to ship, to try the fortunes of our

respective flags. To an officer of your character, it requires some apology for proceeding to further particulars. Be assured, sir, it is not from any doubt I can entertain of your wishing to close with my proposal, but merely to provide an answer to any objection which might be made, and very reasonably, upon the chance of our receiving any unfair support." The letter went on to assure Captain Lawrence that all other British vessels would be sent away before the day of combat. There was added a careful statement of the strength of the *Shannon*, that Lawrence might understand that the ships were fairly matched.

"What a pity, what a pity!" sighed the man. "If Lawrence had only had this before he left, he might have set a day for the fight without compromising his honor, and have prepared himself better for it." And the man shook his head sadly, with a premonition that the day was going badly with his friend.

Up to the forecastle dashed the British marines, Captain Broke at their head. As they were pressing across the deck, Lieutenant Cox, who had just heard that the enemy was aboard, came up from below, and fell in with them, not knowing in the confusion which were friends and which were enemies. He soon learned, for they hacked at him with their cutlasses. But when he looked for friends with whom he could rally to meet the onslaught, he saw none. The deck was deserted. He only saw,

through a hatchway, the rascally Portuguese boat-swain's mate opening the main hatch and letting some British marines down into the hold.

"Don't give up the ship!" broke from the lips of the dying man in the cockpit.

Now the two ships broke apart and drifted away from each other. If Lawrence had been there, if the sailing-master had not been killed, if there had been any one to lead, they might even now have conquered, for the English captain was on board with only a few marines behind him, and they could have taken him captive. But there was no one to lead. Lieutenant Ludlow had long since gone below, overcome by his wounds; Lieutenant Cox was confused and hopeless, and the brave soul that would have risen above the situation lay down in the cockpit, breathing: "Don't give up the ship! Don't give up the ship!"

A little knot of sturdy defenders still stood on the forecastle, braving the oncoming English. They rushed upon the conquerors with the fury of desperate men. For a moment the advance was held back; in the next Broke himself overbore the defense, dashing headlong into the struggle. With one sweep of his Toledo he cut down the first who opposed him, but the next hewed his cutlass through the skull of the Englishman, clear to the brain.

Broke fell; the blade had stopped a thirty-second of an inch short of taking his life at once. Beside him fell an American seaman, dying of a wound.

The two grappled. Weak with the loss of blood and the shock of their wounds, their struggle was feeble, but they were intent on each other's death. The American, with a last rally of his ebbing strength, got on top of the English captain, picked up a bayonet, and was gathering strength to press it home, when an English marine came up.

The marine, in the excitement of the encounter, was about to thrust his bayonet through the body of his own commander, when Broke called out, “Pooh, pooh, you fool! Don't you know your captain?” And the fellow, changing the direction of his blow, slew the American as he was swinging his raised bayonet for the fatal stroke.

Down below in the cockpit the proud soul of James Lawrence was murmuring: “Don't give up the ship! Don't give up the ship!”

And they did not give up the ship, in a sense. There was no one left to give it up. The British simply took possession. Lieutenant Watt of the British marines went and pulled down the ensign. As he did so a shot from the *Shannon* killed him. Some on board thought the *Chesapeake* was still an American ship, and some thought that it had become a British ship. Here men were still fighting; there they had ceased and were talking it over, captor and prisoner.

Sam went to Halifax, as his negro friend had prophesied he would when he left the wharf at Boston

to go aboard the frigate. James Lawrence died on the passage thither, and Captain Broke hovered between life and death. He finally recovered and lived to enjoy immense fame and popularity in England as the only man who had captured a Yankee war-ship.

Halifax went in mourning for the death of Captain Lawrence, whose treatment of the *Peacock's* crew had won for him the regard of the people there. His body was interred in Halifax, but six weeks later was brought to Boston and carried thence to New York, where it found a final resting-place in Trinity church-yard.

This is the inscription on his tomb ; you may see it for yourself when you go to New York.

“ Neither the fury of battle, the anguish of a mortal wound, nor the horrors of approaching death could subdue his gallant spirit. His dying words were : ‘ Don’t give up the ship ! ’ ”

CHAPTER V

THE SICK MAN OF THE LAKE

ALEXANDER PERRY had forgotten the dignity that becomes a young man of twelve years about to enter the United States navy as midshipman and was dancing about the floor of his father's house in unrestrained glee. "Whooppee!" he shouted, and "Whurroooo!"

The cause of young Alexander's excitement was his big brother Oliver Hazard Perry. Oliver was the sort of brother that would excite any proper young man to enthusiasm. He was a sailor, and a lieutenant in the navy ; he had fought Frenchmen in the West Indies and Turks on the Barbary Coast ; he had built gunboats, and had been in a wreck. Now, although he was only twenty-seven years old, he was on his way to take command of the American naval force in Lake Erie and have a fight with the British fleet that was cruising up and down there at will.

But more than all this—he was going to take his brother Alexander along with him and let him help fight the Englishmen. That was surely enough to set any boy prancing and leaping about the floor of his father's house, I should fancy.

"Hush, hush, Alexander," his father was saying from time to time as he talked things over with Lieutenant Oliver. "Don't make such a noise."

A father would have to say that to a prancing boy, no matter how proud he might be of the spirit which his son was showing. With Oliver it was different. Not being the boy's father, he could smile quite frankly, and he did so. Oliver had arrived that afternoon from Newport, where he had been in command of the fleet of gunboats. He was on his way to Sackett's Harbor, to report to Commodore Chauncey, in command on Lake Ontario, and Lieutenant Perry's superior.

"I feel like hopping about myself," said Oliver, watching Alexander, who was gradually hushing, under the reproof of his father. "I had begun to think that every one was going to have a chance in this war but myself." Perry had waited for a long time for a command to go to sea, but, until his appointment to Lake Erie, the best that he got was a flotilla of gunboats at Newport.

"You've got a task on your hands, my boy," said Christopher Perry, the father. He was an old salt; he had commanded the *General Greene*, a frigate of the navy.

"I know it, father," replied Oliver.

"What's your force?"

"We haven't any," replied the young lieutenant, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Two brigs and three gunboats are building at Erie, and there are

some vessels at the navy yard at Black Rock, above Buffalo, but they are bottled up there by the British at Fort George. We've still to build our ships."

"Yes, and fit them out," rejoined his father. "I don't speak to discourage you, my boy, but I want to prepare you for disappointments. You are so overjoyed to get the command that I am afraid you will not stop to think of all you must do."

"I think I know what is called for, father," returned Oliver, modestly.

"I have perfect faith in you, lad," said the man. "You have a chance to win fame and renown, and do your country a great service," he went on. "If you win against the odds, and I know you will, you will have nothing to wish for from your country, and from posterity. When you have wiped the British off Lake Erie, General Harrison can march into Canada without trouble, and we shall regain the northwest territory, lost to us by the surrender of Hull at Detroit. It is a glorious chance, my boy, and I rejoice with you."

Lieutenant Perry's eyes danced with enthusiasm. He got up from his chair and paced the floor, which was his way of prancing. "There's lots to be done, father, I know," he said, "but I am going to do it. I am going to drive the British fleet off the lake if it costs me my life! I have got to begin with the building of a fleet. Then I must get rigging and stores and guns and powder and ball; and then I must get men. I don't know where any of

them are coming from, but I'll get them, and then ——" He finished with a look of eagerness as he paced up and down.

"When are you going?" said his father.

"Now; right away," answered the young lieutenant. In an hour he and Alexander were on the road.

The father's home was in Lebanon, Connecticut, about half-way between Newport, Rhode Island, and Hartford. It was late in February; the weather was cold, and the roads wretched. The two companions had a hard time of it to Hartford, where they got into the post road to Albany and got along easier.

Commodore Chauncey was waiting at Albany for Lieutenant Perry. Chauncey was in command of the naval forces on the Great Lakes; Perry was under him. He had a fleet on Lake Ontario, with which he was playing hide-and-seek with a British fleet. Chauncey's station was at Sackett's Harbor.

Perry and his brother reached Sackett's Harbor on the third of March. There was noise in the air of an attack by the British, and Perry was detained with Chauncey until the sixteenth of March. On the twenty-fourth he was at Buffalo. The next day he spent in the navy yard at Black Point, where were several vessels that he wanted to use on Lake Erie; among them the *Caledonia*, which had been captured from the British by Lieutenant Elliott. But the boats were bottled up there by the English Fort

George, farther up the river, between them and the lake.

Leaving Buffalo on the twenty-sixth, he drove in a sleigh across the frozen lake to Erie. Erie lay at the end of a long bay behind Presque Isle. At the mouth of the bay was a bar which could not be crossed by vessels drawing more than six or seven feet. The bar made the bay a safe place in which to build ships, because the British fleet could not sail in and destroy them on the ways. In the same way, the bar would be just as difficult for the American boats to pass going out. But that was borrowing trouble; the American boats were not yet finished.

Erie was a dreary looking place when Lieutenant Oliver Perry and his brother Alexander reached it on the twenty-seventh of March. A few cabins and a house or two was all. Behind the place were wind-swept stretches of low hills, covered with scattered growth of oak and chestnut, with some pines here and there. A March wind howled through the place, swirling up the snow.

Down by the beach was Perry's fleet. Three small gunboats were nearing completion; Alexander, staring at them through the cold, could see that they would soon be boats. But the two brigs on which the Americans must place their greatest reliance were nothing but two long timbers of thick wood bristling with the stubby beginnings of ribs. For the rest, the fleet was still growing in the forests on the surrounding knolls.

Lieutenant Perry found Noah Brown. Noah Brown was a shipwright from New York. He was in charge of the building of the fleet. He was standing on the keel of one of the brigs, one outstretched hand resting against the stem, consulting with a carpenter, when the two approached. Only a few men were at work, and they did not seem to be accomplishing much. There were great disordered piles of timbers of all sorts and sizes lying about. Nearer the woods some men were sawing away at felled trees. The sound of chopping came from the hills.

"It's Lieutenant Perry?" said Brown, holding out a mittened paw.

"Mr. Brown, you are doing well," replied the young officer, shaking hands, and glancing around at the work under way.

Brown stiffened and brightened in pride. "Fairly well, lieutenant," he admitted. "Especially when you think as how all this here timber was growing in the ground not so far back in point of time. Last fall, I might say."

"You are doing very well," returned Lieutenant Perry, taking in the entire view with his eyes. "Have you heard anything of the enemy? Have they tried to disturb you?"

Mr. Brown stated that they had not been bothered by the British.

"You are all ready for them, I suppose," Perry went on.

"By that you mean—what?" asked Brown.

"You are ready to defend the ship-yard from an attack."

Mr. Brown shook his head. "That's not my line," he said. "I'm not in the fighting line, myself. That's for the likes of you to do."

"We'll do it, then," returned Perry, good-naturedly. "You have some cannon that we could mount, of course. I shall prepare a defense of the place."

"Cannon!" exclaimed Brown. "Why, lieutenant, we haven't so much as a dozen muskets hereabouts, excepting what the people of the town and country have of their own."

Perry turned a look of quick surprise on him. "You don't mean that they have set you to work on a fleet of ships and have not made any provision against the British coming in and destroying the work?"

"That's what I say, and that's what I mean, Lieutenant Perry."

"Are there any men living here?"

"Some."

Perry thought for a moment. "What have you here in the way of rigging and stores, and so forth, Mr. Brown?" he enquired.

"Not a rope yarn, sir," returned the shipwright.

"Is there any on the way?"

Brown spread his hands. "There may be something started from Pittsburg," he ventured. "They'd

better be about it, too," he went on. "Give me time, and I might make rope and sails out of nothin' as I've made the craft themselves."

"How long will it take to get things from Pittsburg, provided they have started?"

Mr. Brown made another gesture with his arms. "Lieutenant," he said, "it's five hundred mile from here to Pittsburg. You could pick your road by the wagons you'll find stuck in the mud between here and there. The weather is coming on soft now pretty soon, and when the snow begins to go you won't know whether it'll be easier to sail our craft to Pittsburg for their outfit or to get here with wagons; that's what I'm sayin', lieutenant. We haven't so much as a marlinspike, let alone cannon; and we've got to get sails, ropes, cannon, muskets, powder and balls, and all the rest over that five hundred mile of mud before we can have a fleet; and that's sayin' truth. But that isn't my part. I'm here to build the ships, and build them I will, if they lie and rot on the ways afterward."

Perry smiled, for all that a cloud of trouble passed over his face. "That's right, Brown," he said. "You build the ships, and I'll see that they don't rot on the ways."

"I rather think you will," said Mr. Brown, after a long look into the eyes of the young officer. "I rather think you will, lieutenant."

Lieutenant Perry walked off with a look of decision in his eyes. That night fifty men from the

neighborhood had been enrolled as militia for the defense of the Erie ship-yard. One man was on his way to Pittsburg with a request to the navy agent there to hurry up a party of shipwrights who were on the way from Philadelphia. Sailing-master Dobbins was cutting off across the ice toward Buffalo to bring back forty men, with muskets and powder, and, if the ice would hold, with some cannon. That was the beginning of Perry's victory of Lake Erie.

And the days that followed were just as much a part of the last triumph as the one particular bit of cool heroism that lifted the final eventful day to a height in history that, like a mountain peak, does not seem to grow less as we pass from it down the grove of time. There were trees to be cut from the forests and sawed into timbers for the ships; there were all the many furnishings of war vessels to be brought from Pittsburg; there were stores to be collected, and men to be gathered for the work of building the ships, and of manning them after they had been built.

Perry, even tempered, good-humored, full of spirit and determination, always thinking of the right thing to do and doing it, threw a force into the task that gradually brought it to completion. He never tired; he never grew discouraged; he constantly heartened every one about him. Sometimes the oak and the chestnut wood that was standing in the tree in the morning was pegged to the ribs of the

brigs by night. Alexander Perry scurried through the country collecting all manner of iron scraps from farmers and roadside blacksmiths to eke out the scanty supply of that metal. The country was combed for blacksmiths. Perry himself made a trip to Pittsburg to hurry things along.

While the work was progressing word came that Chauncey was going to attack Fort George. Perry hastened to join him. If Fort George could be taken, the vessels bottled up at Black Point might be brought down to Erie. Of course, they might fall into the hands of the British while on the way from Buffalo, but the chance was worth taking.

Perry had difficulty in getting to Buffalo, but he arrived there at last, in time to take part in the capture of the fort. It took him more than two weeks to get back to Erie with the boats. He was a fortnight in dragging them up the river from Black Point to Buffalo. Oxen, sailors, and two hundred soldiers laid their shoulders to the ropes.

The trip from Buffalo to Erie was exciting. The British fleet was watching for them. But Perry reached his port all right. When he got there he found the two brigs and three gunboats in the water. Noah Brown had prepared a little surprise for him by launching them.

The brigs were launched while the country was still echoing with the heroism of James Lawrence, who had died on the *Chesapeake* after a gallant fight against the *Shannon*, in the previous April. In

honor of him one of the brigs was called the *Lawrence*. The other was christened *Niagara*.

It was then late in May. By the sixth of June the boats were ready for a fight; but there was no one to fight them. There were not men enough to fully man one of the brigs alone. One-fifth of those at Erie were sick. Perry himself was ill. A lake fever, laying hold of the young lieutenant when he was worn out with work and worry, had dragged him to the edge of a serious illness and threatened to topple him over.

He would not be toppled. His work was only beginning. He must get men. The British fleet under Barclay was sailing up and down the lake; Harrison's army was threatened with defeat, if not destruction, as long as the English controlled the lake. Barclay was only waiting for the completion of another vessel which would give him a force nearly equal to what Perry could muster, now that he had the five vessels from Black Rock. Everything pointed to the need for haste.

The weeks that followed were the most trying through which Lieutenant Perry passed. He battered Chauncey and the Secretary of the Navy for men. Chauncey kept the best of the men that were sent forward from the States, and passed on to Perry remnants and scraps. Perry complained. Chauncey replied in sarcastic vein. Perry was hurt, and wanted to be assigned to another station. The Secretary of the Navy prevailed on him to remain at

Erie. Men continued to come in driblets. Now and then the British fleet showed up beyond the bar.

Perry watched Barclay closely. He could not cross the bar as long as the Englishman was near. It was going to be necessary to lift the two brigs over with floats. While they were being lifted, they would be helpless against the enemy. If Barclay should attack during the operation, there was a chance that all the work since March would come to nothing ; to less than nothing. For, if Barclay held control of the lake, Harrison's army would be in great danger, and the northwest would be lost to the United States.

Barclay had been off and on the bar for a week or more, when one day Alexander Perry came running to his brother and told him the British fleet had vanished. Although he was sick with his fever, Lieutenant Perry set to work at once. The gunboats crossed easily enough ; but the brigs drew nine feet of water, and there were just four feet on the bar that day.

Noah Brown had made a couple of large floats to fit the brigs. One of the brigs, the *Lawrence*, was brought to the bar. The guns were whipped out to lighten her. Three of them were mounted ashore. The floats were veered alongside, filled with water, and sunk to the bottom. Timbers were placed through the ports of the brig, resting on the top of the sunken floats. Then the water was pumped out. As the floats arose, they lifted the brig. At least,

they were supposed to. As a matter of fact, they only half lifted her. The sick man was busy from the morning of August second until the evening of August fourth, without sleep or rest, before the *Lawrence* was in deep water outside. The *Niagara*, the other of the brigs, was brought over more easily on the fifth.

When Barclay showed up he found the entire American fleet ready for sea. His new vessel had not joined him, and he put about and made for Malden, on the north shore of the lake, followed by Perry.

Perry was still destitute of men, and he had not one officer of experience, although he had been on the station five months, and had been asking for men and officers all that time. His right hand man was a sailing-master, Taylor.

In a few days Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott arrived, bringing with him several officers and eighty men. Perry's ships still needed many more, but the young lieutenant was hopeless of getting them, and set out up the lake on the twelfth of August with what he had. He entered Put-in-Bay, where he was brought down with a violent attack of the fever that had been haggling him for a long time. He was ill for several days.

While he was ill, General Harrison sent one hundred soldiers to help out the fleet. Perry got on deck again on September first, still weak and suffering, and started for Malden. Although Barclay had been

joined by the *Detroit*, he would not come out and fight, believing that the American force was still greater than his ; as, in fact, it was. So Perry went back to Put-in-Bay to wait.

At the entrance of Put-in-Bay there is a high rock rising from the lake, at the edge of an island. Perry spent much of his time on the top of this rock, looking for the British fleet. He was informed that General Proctor, the English military officer, was getting hungry, and wanted Barclay to sail down to Long Point and bring up provisions for the army. He therefore expected any moment to see the white sails of the enemy sliding across the breast of the lake.

The rock is still called Perry's Lookout.

It was sunrise on the morning of September 10, 1813. There had been a rain early in the morning, and a wavering mist hung over the lake. No one was on the rock ; it was too early in the day. But there was a man on the lookout of each of the brigs.

Now and then the faint breeze from the southwest tore the mist apart, flinging ribbons of it into the air, opening vistas through it for a time, or spreading it in broad sheets close to the surface of the water.

Alexander Perry, midshipman on the *Lawrence*, which was his brother's flag-ship, was on deck early. He had come out when it was still raining, and had watched the first breaking of the dawn in the east. He was walking restlessly up and down the deck,

waiting for his brother to arise. Oliver had been feeling very bad the night before, suffering from his lake fever, and the younger Perry was worried about him.

Suddenly the man on the lookout sang out :
“Sail ho !”

“Where away ?” shouted Alexander.

“Bearing northwest, hull down ; a number of sail, sir, looking like the fleet of the enemy, sir,” came from the lookout.

The sail were invisible from the deck, because of the mist, which was just then hanging low on the water. Alexander did not stop to see for himself from the rigging, but made off as fast as his legs could take him to report to Oliver.

“I have the honor, sir, to report that the enemy is in sight, bearing northwest,” he said. They were not brothers then ; they were officers on the same ship merely.

Lieutenant Perry had been lying in his berth with staring eyes and a beating headache. His limbs had refused to respond to his will to arise, and he had made up his mind to spend a part of the day, at least, in bed ; for the fever was on him. The word brought by his midshipman brought him to his feet in a leap. He forgot his beating head ; he forgot the fever that was rasping his skin. Dressing hurriedly, he went on deck, ordered sail made, and set signals for the fleet to follow into action. His day had come.

The little fleet that sailed out of Put-in-Bay that morning in 1813 consisted of the two brigs, the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*, that had been built at Erie, the brig *Caledonia*, captured by Lieutenant Elliott and brought from Black Rock, the schooner gunboats *Ariel*, *Scorpion*, and *Porcupine*, that had been built with the brigs at Erie, and the *Somers*, *Tigress* and *Trippe*, brought with the *Caledonia* from Black Rock. Two stout brigs in all, one other brig, and six schooners, armed indifferently. Opposed to them the British had two ships, the *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte*, of about equal strength with the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*, one vessel, the *Hunter*, which was not a match for the *Caledonia*, and three schooners. The British had the advantage in long range guns, but not in number of pieces or weight of metal.

The night before Perry had called all the officers together on board the *Lawrence* and given them instructions for the engagement which he expected soon to take place. The instructions were in writing. They told the officers the order of battle, and assigned to each ship the enemy's vessel that that ship was to take care of in the coming fight. The *Niagara* was to handle the *Queen Charlotte*, and the *Lawrence* the *Detroit*, which was Barclay's flag-ship. Two schooners, the *Scorpion* and the *Ariel*, were to proceed ahead of the line of battle to support the *Lawrence*. The *Caledonia* was to follow the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* the *Caledonia*. Behind them the schooners were to range. Each vessel was or-

dered to keep half a cable length from the one ahead of it. But as a final instruction, and one to govern all situations, Perry told his officers, in the words of Admiral Nelson, "If you lay your enemy close alongside, you cannot be out of your place."

Put-in-Bay is among islands that range, in a general way, northwest and southeast. The wind was southwest, and light. Perry wanted to get to the windward of the enemy; that was always an advantage in a sailing ship fight. For that purpose he tried to beat out between the islands, but the wind was too light. He gave the order to wear ship and pass to the leeward of the islands.

"You will engage your enemy from to leeward, sir," suggested Sailing-master Taylor.

"To windward or to leeward, they shall fight to-day," rejoined Lieutenant Perry, compressing his lips.

The hours that followed were trying hours for him. The fever racked him. It was like something gnawing at all the joints of his body, and his head swam in pain. By sheer force of will he kept it under, and stood up for the fight that was to come.

Going into his cabin, he came back with a bunch of blue bunting hanging over his arm. He called the crew, and spread out the bunting. It was a flag, bearing on it, painted in white, the words with which James Lawrence died: "Don't Give Up the Ship." He had shown it to the officers in his cabin the night before, when he called them in for their orders.

"Shall I put it up?" he asked his men on the flag-ship.

Their answer was a cheer, and the flag went to the maintopgallantmast head.

The mists vanished, and the day turned clear and warm; a beautiful day of the late summer. The lake sparkled under the gentle breeze that puffed across it; the wooded shores of the islands brought their green to mingle with the lighter green of the surrounding water. Above bent a sky of perfect blue. And white on the breast of the running waters of the lake rode the ships of the two fleets.

Alexander Perry followed his brother up and down the deck. Lieutenant Perry encouraged his men. They were a motley lot. Some of them were good sailors and fighting men; some of them had been on the *Constitution*, and some had come with Perry from Newport. Others were farm lads or soldiers; little more than boys, many of them. There were a number of negroes. But since he had brought them together Lieutenant Perry had been training them in the manual of fighting, until now they knew what was expected of them. And the men loved the young fellow that had taken control of them.

By good luck, as they were beating up toward the enemy, sailing full and by, the wind hauled to the southwest, giving them a fair breeze. It was still sluggish, but favorable.

The British fleet, ranged in a long line across the

water, its sails gleaming in the sunlight, was a beautiful sight as the American squadron approached. Middy Perry, standing on the forecastle, could see the black guns thrust out of the ports and the men crawling about the vessels. Standing there he heard the blast of a bugle on the *Detroit* calling the crew to quarters. His heart bounded; the fight was almost on. It was not long before there was a puff of smoke from the sides of the *Detroit* and a ball came bounding over the waves, too short in flight to strike the *Lawrence*. Soon there was another shot, and this one tore through the bulwarks. Alexander Perry returned to his brother's side on the quarter-deck.

The guns on the *Lawrence*, with the exception of two long twelves, were thirty-two pound carronades, a good weapon at close range but harmless at a distance. For that reason Lieutenant Perry did not reply to the fire, but bore in, setting a signal to the fleet to close, and passing word back with the trumpet.

The American line was approaching at a slight angle, and the *Lawrence* was the first to come close to the enemy, the two schooners in advance being a little to windward of the flag-ship. By the time she was within two hundred and fifty yards, which is rather more than the length of a town square, she was receiving the fire of the *Hunter* and the *Detroit*, and it was necessary for her to stop and answer it. There she stopped, and there she fought as savage a fight as any ship ever fought.

With the first discharge from the guns of the *Lawrence*, it seemed to Perry that his head had been split, so intense was the pain. But in the heat and excitement of battle he forgot the pain, and forgot his illness, excepting when a shivering wave of heat rushed up and down his back, and his eyes swam for a moment now and then.

Shot were tearing across the decks of the *Lawrence*, mowing down men, crunching through the bulwarks, snapping the rigging, chewing at the masts. The men at the guns returned the fire without flinching. The air was full of slivers that whirled over side, or hummed like great tops across the decks. The shrill shrieks of the wounded pierced the huge noise of firing cannon.

"The *Queen Charlotte* is drawing up, sir," reported Alexander to Lieutenant Perry. Oliver turned from an inspection of the *Detroit* through his glass to look at the *Queen Charlotte*. She was slowly drawing ahead of the *Hunter*, and swinging into a position where her fire would half rake the *Lawrence*. Lieutenant Perry turned swiftly toward the *Niagara*, which should have been alongside of the *Queen Charlotte*. The *Niagara* was behind the *Caledonia*, which was a slow sailer, pounding away at intervals with her long twelves. Her topsail was aback ; she was clearly not making any effort to get into the thick of the fight for the relief of the flag-ship.

"What's the matter with the *Niagara*? Why don't the *Niagara* come up?" men on the deck were

saying to each other, noticing the advance of the *Queen Charlotte*, which should have been kept busy by Lieutenant Elliott.

It did no good to enquire the reason. The important thing for the present was that the *Queen Charlotte* was turning her guns at closer range on the *Lawrence*, already the target for two vessels, and that she must stand them off alone. Not quite alone ; the two gunboats that had preceded were barking and spitting, ignored and unmolested by the fire of the British fleet ; and the *Caledonia*, at a distance, was throwing her long shot into the *Queen Charlotte*.

The men on the *Lawrence* soon felt the effect of the converging fire. They tumbled over white, like corn in a popper. Dead and wounded were lying about the deck so thick in places that the powder monkeys, serving the guns, had to hop among the bodies or step on them. Perry, looking at the wounded as they lay on the deck waiting to be taken to the cockpit for the surgeon's care, met their eyes gazing at him, to read in his face how the battle went.

A shot, entering a port, cleaned away from a gun every man but one. That one looked at Perry, pleading with his eyes for more men to serve the gun. Perry shouted down to the cockpit : "How many men have you assisting?"

"Six," answered the surgeon.

"Send one of them on deck." He was added to others who came from a gun that had been dismounted, and the crew was renewed.

Lieutenant Yarnall came to the quarter-deck. He had a bandana bound around his neck, and another around his head. Each stopped a bleeding wound. The man was dressed in a sailor's suit, with no sign of office on him. He asked for officers. Perry spared him one.

Presently he was back again. A sliver had pierced his nose, which was frightfully swollen. Clotting blood stuck to his face here and there. "I am out of officers," he said, again.

Perry had no more to give him.

Lieutenant Brook was standing by the side of the commander. A solid shot struck him on the hip, throwing him into the scupper. "Shoot me, shoot me!" he cried to Perry, in mortal pain, knowing that he would not live. He was carried below into the cockpit, where he would not permit the surgeons to attend to him, knowing it would be a waste of time.

The brig was shallow. The cockpit was above the water line. Solid shot crashed through the walls of the vessel and churned their way across the room where the wounded were being tended by the surgeon, who had now lost all of his six assistants to the deck.

Dulany Forrest, midshipman, standing on the quarter-deck talking with Perry as they both watched the fight, was struck in the breast by a grape-shot that had come through the bulwarks, struck the mast, and glanced. The blow knocked him over. Perry stepped to him and lifted his head. He saw

no blood on the lad's shirt. In a moment Forrest raised himself to his feet and looked around. The grape-shot that had hit him was lying on the planking. He picked it up. "I guess that is mine for a relic," he said, and thrust it into his pocket.

One by one the guns were being swept clear of their crews, or silenced. Six, four, two were left fighting the weight of three opposed vessels. Out of the crew only one-fifth were unhurt; one out of every five men had been killed or wounded. Every brace and bowline was shot away; the *Lawrence* was unmanageable. She could only stand and answer feebly with what guns she had left, while the enemy chewed her to pieces; reduced her to a wreck. Where was the *Niagara*? What had happened to Elliott?

A shot, striking the bulwarks, stripped off a hammock. Hammocks were fastened along the bulwarks before the engagement to hold slivers. This one, snatched from its fastenings, was yanked through the air and flung against Alexander Perry, knocking him from his feet. Oliver turned just in time to see his brother fall.

For the first time in the engagement his spirits fell. He rushed to the side of the young midddy, but before he could raise him, Alexander scrambled to his feet and looked at his commanding officer with a sheepish grin.

Two o'clock, and after. For more than two hours the *Lawrence* had been at the apex of the fire from

three of the enemy's vessels. She was a wreck. Unmanageable, with only one gun in commission, four-fifths of her men gone, and no officer left uninjured excepting Perry and his brother, she floated helplessly in front of the destroying guns of the enemy. She had done damage, but the odds had been too heavy.

Lieutenant Perry and Lieutenant Yarnall were discussing the situation. They would not strike; they did not think of that as an alternative; they were trying to figure out some stratagem.

"There comes the *Niagara*," cried Alexander.

They looked, and saw the brig, that had been out of the fight until now, slowly creeping up to the windward of the *Caledonia*, making for the head of the British line but in a course parallel with it. Neither Perry nor Yarnall could understand the manœuvre. As they looked, the light of an idea came into the fever-ridden eyes of the commander. His glance shot along the davits. There was one boat left.

"I am going aboard the *Niagara*," he said. "I shall transfer my flag."

He walked to the one gun that was left, helped the broken crew to load it; trained it, and fired.

Five minutes later a boat, rowed by all that was left unharmed of the crew of the *Lawrence*, shot out from the brig's side and made direct for the *Niagara*, passing a half mile away. In the stern stood a tall figure in a lieutenant's uniform. Over one shoulder



PERRY LEAVING THE LAWRENCE

was draped a flag of blue bunting. On the blue were painted white letters; one could not make out what they were as they lay folded. Beside the standing man, tugging at his coat-tails, was Alexander Perry, trying to make his big brother sit down in the boat.

And with good reason, too. It was dangerous enough to venture out on clear water in that little craft, with three or four of the enemy's vessels pounding broadsides at it, and the whole musketry of the marines pelting the lake with bullets. But for the man to stand, when all the future of the war in those parts depended on his getting safely to the *Niagara*, was foolhardy and a wicked risk. Probably it was a touch of the fever.

They had not gone far when two of the men ceased rowing, and would not begin again until the lieutenant sat down. The strike brought him to reason. He sat, and the boat went on.

In these days the craft would not have much of a chance with the accurate guns and gunnery; but in those times all weapons were smooth bore, and could not shoot as straight as the modern rifles. Only one ball struck. It passed through one side of the boat, thumping a hole near the water line. Perry stripped off his lieutenant's coat and stuffed it into the hole to keep out the water.

Lieutenant Elliott, meeting Perry as he climbed aboard, was dumbfounded. Probably he wished that he had come up sooner with the *Niagara* to the

relief of the *Lawrence*. "What is the result on board your brig?" he blurted. The result was plainly to be seen in the shattered bulwarks, the swinging rope ends of rigging, the flopping sails, and the dead peace that brooded over her death-strewn decks.

"All cut to pieces," answered Perry. He looked alow and aloft, and saw that the *Niagara* was not injured. Hardly a shot had taken effect, and those that had come aboard had done no damage. The crew was fresh and whole.

The flag of the commodore, with its motto: "Don't give up the ship," went to the masthead, and Perry assumed command of the *Niagara*. His plans were made.

"Shall I bring up the schooners, sir?" said Elliott. The schooners were trailing a mile or two astern, sluggards in the light breeze that was blowing. By signal and trumpet they had been ordered to come up as rapidly as they could, and they were doing so, using sweeps to help, but both Perry and Elliott felt the embarrassment of the latter's presence on the *Niagara*, and were glad to make use of the excuse. Elliott leaped into the boat that had brought Perry from the *Lawrence*, and started for the schooners.

Less than a half mile away were the *Detroit*, the *Queen Charlotte*, and the *Hunter*, at the head of the British line. They had been heavily handled by the *Lawrence*; their sides were splintered by her shot; many of their guns were useless; their decks

were soppy with blood, and their crews were exhausted. Perry, on a fresh ship of twenty guns, with a crew that had been held in leash, enjoying the weather gauge on his enemy, had one chance. He saw it, and took it.

The topsail was set aback. The *Niagara* hung in the water, hove to for an instant, the helm was thrown over, the sails shifted, the wind filled them, and she payed off, heading directly for the two largest of the enemy: the flag-ship *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte*.

Down upon them she swept, with her guns double-shotted, the flag of the sick man of the lakes, with its white lettered motto, rollicking in the breeze. Alexander hopped up and down twice on the quarter-deck, midshipman though he was. His big brother was going to win the fight, and he knew it.

Close and closer she drew across the sparkling water. The *Lady Prevost*, her rudder broken, had drifted out of the line and passed ahead of the *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte*. Perry drove the *Niagara* between the *Lady Prevost* and the others. The *Detroit*, trying to veer to bring her broadside to bear, fouled the *Queen Charlotte*, and the two were helpless for a time. Perry held his fire.

Now he was among the British vessels, hanging on their line of battle. He shortened sail in an instant. The *Niagara* paused like a falcon about to strike. There was a lurching heave of her decks, a

shiver that ran away and died through her timbers, a bursting roar of all her guns.

To the left the *Lady Prevost* staggered under the shock of the port broadside. To the right a shriek arose from the *Detroit* of many mingled voices.

The shriek was the death cry of the fleet.

One of the men struck down on the *Detroit* was Captain Barclay. He had lost an arm at Trafalgar. Now the other was nearly torn from his body. He was carried below, and the fate of the fleet rested in less expert hands. Finnis, captain of the *Queen Charlotte*, who had been in command of the fleet before Barclay, was already dead.

There was no one left on the decks of the *Lady Prevost* but the captain. A bullet had struck him in the face, and driven him crazy with pain. The rest of the crew had run below after the first discharge from the broadside of the *Niagara*. Perry ordered the marines to cease firing at the *Lady Prevost*.

The *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* were clear now, and fought back weakly, with what little strength they had left. There were gallant men on board. But Perry, in his fresh vessel, hung on their flanks, biting deep with each leaping charge of his guns. And the schooners, brought up by Lieutenant Elliott, came within range and poured canister and grape into the almost helpless enemy. The end had come. One after another the British vessels struck; the *Queen Charlotte* first, then the *Detroit*, and the *Lady Prevost*. Two gunboats tried to get away, but

were overhauled and captured before they could reach Malden.

And what of the *Lawrence* all this time? She was a drifting wreck, slowly passing out of the range of fire. Lieutenant Yarnall, left in charge by Perry when he took to the *Niagara*, had hauled down the flag as soon as his superior officer reached the deck of the *Niagara*, but no one had time to come aboard from the British to make her a prize.

Wounded men lay about her decks, dragging themselves to where they could see the end of the fight, faintly cheering from time to time as some stroke fatal to the British became apparent. And when the British flags came down, one by one, the ghost of a rousing cheer lifted above the groans of the men under the surgeon's knife in the cockpit below, and the sighs of the dying, to waft the departing souls on their contented way to the next world.

Great was to be the reward of those men. For when the English officers came to surrender, Perry would not receive them on any other planks than those of the gallant *Lawrence*. There, among the heaps of the dead, and surrounded by wounded and dying, who still looked into his face with the same loving trustfulness that he had seen there all through the deadly fight, he received the surrender of the officers of the British fleet.

When all was done; when the sun had sunk behind the western waves and the future of the northwest had been assured, Oliver Hazard Perry sank

in his berth on the brig and slept throughout the night as deeply and as peacefully as any of those near him whose sleep was to be forever.

Not far from him lay his brother, Alexander, midshipman in the American navy, and that night the proudest young lad in all the world.

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE WIND PLAYED TRICKS ON THE *ESSEX*

A HALF dozen American bluejackets were sitting about a rough table under the shade of an olive tree in the patio of an old wine-shop in Valparaiso, Chili. They were members of the crew of the United States frigate *Essex*, Captain David Porter. The night before there had been merrymaking aboard the frigate ; a party given by the officers to the officials of Valparaiso. These men had come ashore to continue the festivities on their own score. Half the crew was ashore on similar business. The bottle was passing frequently ; talk was loud and laughter high.

It was early in February, 1814. The United States had been at war with England for nearly two years. The frigates of the United States had met the ships of Old England in more than one bloody encounter, and had come off victorious. The *Essex* had done her part ; she had fought savagely and well. Now she was in the Chilean port with the *Essex Junior* after a long cruise in the Pacific in which she had played havoc with British shipping, capturing more than a dozen British vessels and frightening English commerce from the entire sea.

News of her had been carried to England. It had

roused high resentment. That one little frigate should command so large a territory and drive from so vast a sea the ships of the mistress of all the seas, as England proudly proclaimed herself to be, was more than their pride could endure. The English Admiralty had despatched a fleet to remove the troublesome frigate.

Information that England had sent a fleet had come to Valparaiso, and rumors were running that some of the enemy were not far off. The talk of the men sitting about the table in the little wine-shop was of their present situation, and how Captain Porter would meet it.

"Ye cannot tell what he will do," declared one of the men, "for he thinks of things that no other man would think of. But this ye may know; in some way, and that the best way, he will fight."

"Aye, that he will," answered another. "He's the fightin'est man I ever see. Why, I remember ——"

"Come, Nick, what do you remember?" interrupted a third, laughing; for it was well known that Nick Haydock remembered many things that never had happened.

"He will not only fight because he is brave," went on Joel Hawes, the one who had spoken first, "but he will fight because he hates the British with a lovely hatred, borrowed of the time when he was pressed aboard their ships of war and beaten by the hands of their coxswains."

"Was he so?" exclaimed another sailor, Harry Hotchkiss by name, who was little more than a lad.

"Aye, twice over, and he will never feel that the score is even," answered Hawes.

"I remember," began Nick again, but got no farther.

"When was he impressed, then?" piped up the youthful sailor, turning to Hawes; a grizzled old salt with a broad beard and tattoo marks thick on arms and chest. He had been captain of a long eighteen on the *Essex's* forecastle for two cruises.

"When he was but a lad of sixteen or thereabouts," Joel answered. "He had already had one narrow squeeze from it before he was taken. 'Twas in 1796, the first time when he got away. He was cruising in the West Indies with his father, who was a fighting man before him, as was his grandfather as well. They fell in with a British press gang, and there was a rough and tumble fight, young Porter taking his full share in it. In the end they drove off the Britishers, but on the next voyage he was taken, together with the whole crew.

"But a tough nut to crack he proved to be. He would not serve, no matter what they might do. They put him in irons, and kept him on bread and water, but his spirits only rose the higher. Then on a day they brought him on deck for a flogging, to see if they could not cure him of his stubbornness, but he jumped overboard and swam to a Danish vessel that was in the harbor, where he was let alone."

"I might tell ye more o' that," said one of the group, a sandy-haired Scotchman who had said nothing until now.

"Come, now, Bissly, have ye a tongue, then?" cried Nick, in banter. "'Twould be news enough to hear ye speak, my hearty."

"'Twould be no so much as to hear ye hold your peace, mon," retorted the Scot.

"Let's have the tale, then," they all cried, amid much mirth over the sally.

"'Tis but a wee bit o' a tale, but it shows the mettle o' the mon, nane the less," began Bissly. "'Tis only that I had a brither on board thet same ship when young Porter was brought forward to be flogged. The crew was standin' about, as is the fashion on such occasions, thet they might be properly impressed wi' the floggin', and the coxswain stood with bared arms and stiff muscles, the cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand, ready to begin. They were leadin' the lad across the deck, and his head was high and there was fire in his eyes as he went, I may tell 'e. When he was in the midst of the deck, o' a sudden thought he dashed aside the men who held him and made a leap for a gun-port, knockin' down twa fellows as he ran. It chanced that one o' the twa was me own brither, and I may say that he tried little enough to stop him, for he had a warm likin' for the lad. There was nothin' done to fetch him back again; belike the British officers thought they had made good riddance. But the floggin' thet was

to go to him was gi'en those who let him get free, among them my brither. 'Twas the first and the last he ever had. He often told me the whole tale, as I tell it ye, but with many more words, until a shot carried his soul to eternity."

"Then what happened to him?" prompted Hotchkiss, for fear the yarns would cease to be spun.

Joel took up the tale. "They would not molest him on board the *Dane*, where he made out to swim. The Danes took him with them to Europe, but when he was on the way home again the British laid hold on him once more, and this time they handled him rougher than the first. But once more, by hook or by crook, he escaped and got back to the United States, in time to go aboard the *Constellation* and be in the fight with the *Vengeance* and the *Insurgent*, in the war with France."

"I remember ——" broke in Nick again.

"Come, now, what do you remember?" cried the second sailor. "The man must have it out, or he'll burst."

"Aye, Nick, out with it," laughed Joel.

"I remember the time we had with those same howling Frenchmen we took on the *Insurgent*," he went on. "Thirteen of us were sent aboard from the *Constellation* to transfer the prisoners to her, the *Insurgent* being in a fair way to sink at any minute from the shot holes we had put in her. Lieutenant Rodgers was in command of us and there was myself and little Davy Porter here, among others."

"Hurrah!" shouted two or three of the tars, laughing at the way he had put it.

"And 'twas not a wholly pleasant thing, either," went on Nick, paying no attention to their banter. "There we were, thirteen men in all ——"

"That's countin' you and Middy Porter as one apiece, I take it," laughed Joel.

"Thirteen men in all," repeated Nick. "As I was a-sayin', 'twas not a pleasant thing, thirteen men to the whole crew, but we were making the most of it and getting 'em off as fast as we could, when, as bad luck would have it, a hurricane blew up and drove us apart from the *Constellation* while there were still one hundred and seventy-three of the Frenchmen between decks; which, as you may figure for yourself, was thirteen of them to one of us. I have seen storms at sea in my time, lads, but never have my eyes beheld such a blow as that there one was. Keel-haul me for a lubber, if the waves didn't run as high as those mountains over yonder," nodding his head in the direction of the Cordilleras, which were in view from where they sat.

"That's a mere ripple of a wave," laughed the second sailor.

"The wind was a-howlin' overhead, and the Frenchmen a-howlin' between decks, and the ship takin' water, havin' been ready to sink from the time we had left off firin' on her, and only thirteen of us to work ship, man the pumps, stand trick at the wheel, and keep the Frenchmen in order," he went

on, ignoring the others. "But we were equal to it. They put me, with another man, as bein' the most reliable for the position, at the hatches, with muskets, and orders to shoot the first Frenchman that showed his head. The rest worked the ship. For two days and three nights, my hearties, we fought without a wink of sleep, and made our way through the father of all gales into the harbor of St. Kitts, where we found the *Constellation*, never expecting to see us again."

"And it so happens that all of that is true, every word of it," commented Joel, nodding his head at the others.

"True as the compass!" asserted Nick.

"That puts me in mind of the time we had after we had taken the British corvette *Alert*, a year and more ago," put in the second sailor. "'Twas on the first cruise of this same little *Essex*, and we were already shorthanded from putting prize crews into two prizes we had taken, when we tricked the *Alert* and brought down her colors with one round broadside. We already had aboard some two hundred soldiers we had taken from a transport that we captured ——"

"Aye!" exclaimed Joel. "The one we cut out of the fleet. 'Twas a rich joke, that."

"What was that?" asked young Hotchkiss.

"I'll tell ye soon," said Joel, and the second sailor resumed his tale.

"There was this mess of British between decks,

and we were shorthanded, as I have told ye. 'Twould have been a small matter for them to have risen and got the best of us, and Porter knew it well. One night when all was quiet young Midshipman Farragut, the same who is now on board ——"

"Aye, aye," said Hotchkiss; for Farragut was his own particular hero.

"Midshipman Farragut was in his hammock when he saw the coxswain of the British captain's gig pacing up and down with a pistol in his hand, looking first this way and then that, out of the tail of his eye. Farragut knew at once that something was up, but how was he to get word to Captain Porter? The coxswain was watching him, and pretty soon came over and held a lantern in his face. Young Farragut was sleeping as sweet as a babe, for anything the fellow could see, so he went on with his pistol.

"As soon as he was gone, little middy jumps out of his hammock and runs to the quarter-deck. 'There's mutiny aboard, sir,' says he to the captain; and he told what he had seen. Thereat Captain Porter runs to the break of the poop and bellows out 'Fire!' like any bull, and the bluejackets aloft and aloft came running to the deck, while the chaps below was so frightened at the thought of being drowned like rats that they forgot all about the mutiny."

"Was there a fire?" asked Hotchkiss.

"Not a spark nor a flame of it, my lad," returned

the tar. "'Twas an old trick of his, and 'tis yet, as you may have noticed more than once for yourself, to bellow fire and bring all hands to quarters in a jiffy, for fire drill. As soon as his men were together, and before the mutineers had found out the trick, Captain Porter turned the men of his ship upon them and quickly put a stop to all their nonsense. And it was not long before they were all sent to St. Johns, Newfoundland, on the *Alert*, as a cartel, so that danger was removed."

"What about the troop-ship?" asked Hotchkiss, turning to Joel. He never tired of hearing these old salts spin their yarns of the sea.

"Well," Joel began, "'twas on this same cruise, and a little before this, that we sighted seven vessels one night under convoy of a frigate. Anybody but Porter would have found that he had business somewhere else just about that time, but not him. He brought down his topgallantmasts, so that his rig would not show so high, ran his guns inboard, closed the ports, slacked off his running rigging to make it like that of a merchant ship, and otherwise made our good frigate look as much like a lubbery merchantman as she could. Then he slipped in among them, not knowing precisely what he was going to do himself, but ready for anything that might turn up.

"The trick worked fine; for a long time the blooming Britishers did not suspect that we were not one of their own vessels. At last one of the captains began to think that things looked queer, and started

to make signals to the frigate. The old man ran alongside of her, opened his ports, stuck out his guns, and commanded the British captain to follow him out of the fleet, which he did, very peacefully, not wishing to be sent to the bottom. He had on board two hundred soldiers out of a thousand that the fleet was carrying from Barbadoes to Quebec. We would have returned for another haul, but it was too near dawn for that.

"In the morning the old man ran in again, with his topgallantmasts set up, his rigging shipshape, and his guns out, the *Essex* looking the frigate that she was, and hove to off the bows of the convoy. The British we had aboard were very anxious for a fight, thinking their man could have handled us, and so were we, thinking he could not. But the coward drew off into the protection of the fleet, all of whom carried guns, and we had to put about without more prizes. But for simple audacity you cannot beat it; going into a fleet of eight ships with one little frigate and cutting out a prize from under the noses of the other seven."

"He beat it himself, though, that time the *Shannon* chased us," asserted Nick. "I remember it well."

"Aye, that he did," Joel confirmed

"I remember it well," went on Nick. "You would have thought that any man in a forty-two gun frigate would have showed a clean pair of heels if he got a chase from three of the enemy, two of them bigger and heavier than himself, but not so our Cap-

tain Porter, bless him. He made off as though he was trying to get away until night came, and then he rigged out kedge anchors on his yard-arms, ready to drop them on the deck of the enemy, and went about on a tack, figuring to meet one of them. You see, it was this way," Nick explained, drawing a sketch of the manœuvre on the table with his thumb nail. "We are all sailing free, with the wind on our larboard. They had the wind of us, but we were well ahead. After dark-fall, he went on the port tack, making about five or six knot, while the enemy, sailing free, came down at about eight. He had figured it all out that we would meet at a certain place where the two courses crossed, both of us bringing up there at the same time. As soon as ever we came alongside, which we could have done, for they never would have thought that it was the enemy approaching them, he was going to let go his kedge anchors, grapple, and board, before the two others could come up. He calculated that he could take the ship and get her under way again before the rest of the squadron would know what he was fairly doing. And that's just what he would have done, too, if the English vessel had not changed her course unknown to him, and so missed us."

The Scotchman Bissly, who had been looking out of the door of the shop behind which they were sitting while Nick told his story, arose to his feet when it was ended and said, mysteriously: "Me boys, there's mischief afoot!"

The others turned to him quickly ; the times were full of possibilities. "What is it now?" they demanded.

"I have but now seen a mon that I ken well enough to know that he is up to some evil. I sailed with him once in a ship that he was mate of ; the same that is now in the harbor, and ye may have my grog for a week if he is not doing some trick on us."

"Have done with riddles," cried Joel Hawes, with a sailor's oath. "Out with it."

"Na, I dinna ken what it will be aboot, but I mean to have a look to see," Bissly returned, starting to leave.

The lad Hotchkiss sprang up. "I'll go with you," he said, eager for adventure.

"That ye may do, if you like," returned the Scot, "but the rest had best bide here."

Bissly left, accompanied by the young sailor.

Those who stayed behind over the bottle had ceased to speculate on what had started the Scotchman off, and were in the midst of tales of the time when David Porter, falling into the hands of the Tripolitans through the grounding of the frigate *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli during our war with that country, lay for nineteen months a prisoner in the Bashaw's palace, when the deep boom of a gun shook the still hot air and brought them all to their feet.

They rushed to the water side and saw the *Essex* flying signals recalling her men from shore leave.

They clambered into a boat, and were just making off, when Bissly and Hotchkiss came running down to the water's edge and hailed. The others put back for them and took them aboard.

"What did you find out?" Joel asked Bissly.

"'Twas as I thought," returned Bissly. "The rogue went into a boat and pulled out to sea. For my part, I guess well where he has gone. This gun from the *Essex* tells it all. The British fleet has come, and he went out to tell thet 'twas a good time to try to take the *Essex*, we being all ashore and more or less awash with the recent festivities."

The Scotchman was right. The mate of an English merchantman in the harbor, hearing of the approach of a British man-of-war, and knowing that half the crew of the *Essex* were ashore in Valparaiso continuing the amusements of the evening before, had gone out in a little boat to meet the approaching frigate and notify the captain of her that the opportunity was ripe for a quick attack on the American vessel.

The man-of-war was the British frigate *Phæbe*, Captain Hillyar, accompanied by the sloop-of-war *Cherub*. They were the first to arrive of the fleet that had been reported as coming out to capture the *Essex* and rid the Pacific Ocean of the enemy that had plagued British shipping for so long.

Porter had been informed of the approach of the two frigates by the *Essex Junior*, which was cruising outside. Under the laws between nations, when two

nations are at war the vessels of neither may be attacked by the vessels of the other when they are within three miles of the shore of a third country, or in any port belonging to the third country. That is what is meant by the neutrality of waters and of ports. Valparaiso, Chili, was a neutral port.

But David Porter was not at all certain that the Englishman would respect the neutrality of the port of Valparaiso. Chili was a very young republic, and very weak, and would hardly be able to enforce respect from him for the neutrality of her ports. Porter was not going to take any chances. He at once fired a gun—the gun that the knot of sailors in the wine-shop had heard—and ran up signals recalling all his men from shore leave. While he was waiting for them to come aboard, he went about preparing a reception for the stranger, if he saw fit to attempt to make trouble. He cleared for action, called to quarters, stowed powder and shot about the decks ready for "quick use, and formed his boarders.

Joel Hawes, Harry Hotchkiss, Nick Haydock, Bissly, and the others who had been with them in the wine-shop, were paddling across the harbor as fast as they could ; it was a crazy, cranky dugout they were in, and progress was slow and dangerous. If they had not already had much experience in similar craft since they had been cruising in the Pacific they would probably not have got very far in it, but they managed to paddle along without upsetting, with that skill which an American so quickly

learns whenever he turns his hand to something new.

Other canoes were all about them, some making better headway than they, and some not going as fast. Here and there in the water bobbed the head of some sailor who had not stopped to find a boat, but had plunged in to swim out to his ship. There was shouting back and forth between the canoes, and an exchange of opinion of all Englishmen, and these in particular; for by this time there was no doubt that the English ships were coming.

"There they are now!" cried Harry Hotchkiss, who was paddling in the bow of the dugout.

The others, looking up and following his gaze, saw two towering clouds of canvas bearing into the harbor under full press. A shout that was half a snarl rang over the water from the scurrying canoes, and the men in them doubled their efforts at the paddles.

All doubt of the intention of the British frigate had disappeared when Joel's boat load reached the decks of the *Essex*. The *Phæbe*, the larger of the two, was bearing directly down upon them under a spread of canvas. She was already so close that the Americans could see her men at their stations, clearly ready for a fight, and expecting one.

The *Essex* was in a bustle of preparation. Hammocks were being lashed to the gunwales, to prevent as much as possible the flying splinters, the most deadly result of an enemy's shot; some sailors were

dousing the decks with water, to kill any stray powder that might be spilled ; others were sprinkling sand about the planking, and setting buckets of it here and there to be thrown on the decks when flowing blood should make them slippery. Powder monkeys were fetching powder ; the marines were forming in the gangways ; down below in the cockpit the surgeons were laying out their instruments and bandages.

As a last preparation Captain Porter ordered kedge anchors to be rigged ready for hauling to the yard-arms, where they could be dropped upon the deck of the enemy. That was a way they had when vessels came close together. If one wished to board the other, the kedge anchors were hauled to the yard-arms and let go on the enemy's deck. Then they were hauled in, the two vessels were grappled together, and the boarders would pour over bulwarks and through gun-ports armed with cutlasses, pikes, and pistols.

Joel Hawes was captain of a long eighteen on the forecastle. Harry Hotchkiss was in his gun crew. Bissly was in the crew next to them. They went to their stations, stripping themselves to their waists so that they could move more freely, and so that, if they were struck by a splinter of musket ball, no cloth would be driven into their flesh.

On came the *Phæbe*, drawing closer and closer. The men on the *Essex* hungered to let go at her as she slipped along, a half pistol-shot away. But the

officers, pacing up and down behind the guns, held them back. Captain Porter would not break the law of nations. If the Englishman chose to do so, Porter was ready for him. If he had known what was going to happen within the next few weeks, he probably would not have been so scrupulous, and this would have been a different story.

The *Phæbe*, driving on before the breeze, slid under the stern of the *Essex*, luffed up, and came on to her port bow, fifteen feet away. Joel Hawes shut his eyes; the target was too tempting; he was afraid to look at it for fear he would let go his gun and begin the trouble.

Captain Hillyar was clearly surprised at the readiness of the American frigate. He had expected to find her half empty. He had expected to see what men she might have aboard lolling around her decks, after the manner of sailors in port. Instead, they were all at their guns, with matches ready. He changed his mind about rushing her.

Climbing upon a gun of the quarter-deck section, he hailed Captain Porter, whom he had met in a friendly way in the Mediterranean, during the trouble between the United States and the Barbary powers ten years before. "Captain Hillyar's compliments to Captain Porter, and hopes he is well!" said the Englishman, with studied politeness.

"Very well, thank you," returned Porter, rather grimly, "but I hope you will not come too near for fear some accident might happen that would be dis-

agreeable to you." He waved his trumpet, and the kedge anchors soared away to the yard-arms.

Captain Hillyar was alarmed. The kind of a disagreeable accident that might happen to him was quite clear to the Englishman from the crowds of armed men aboard the *Essex*, ready to board, and at the guns with lighted matches, to say nothing of the kedge anchors dangling above his head. He braced back his yards in great haste, and called out to Porter: "If I do fall aboard of you, I beg to assure you that it will be purely accidental." There was a trace of anxiety in his tones.

"Well, you have no business there," returned Porter. "If you touch a rope-yarn of this ship, I shall board instantly." He signaled Lieutenant Downes, commanding the *Essex Junior*, to be ready to repel the enemy.

The American sailors were trembling with eagerness to begin the fight. They had the English frigate at a deadly advantage; she lay stern to under their broadsides; they could have raked her from stern to stem, and taken her by boarding before the *Cherub* could come up. Low talk went along the lines of gunners; they were like sprinters staring, straining at the starting line, waiting for the signal gun that sends them flying down the track.

And they nearly heard the gun. The imagination of Nick Haydock, always active, was now overheated by the closeness of the British and the pleasures of the last two days. Gazing out at the line of English

faces, which were plainly visible at the ports, he fancied that one of them was grinning and making grimaces at him. That he would stand from no John Bull. He picked up a gun. His eye ran along the barrel. He was about to pull the trigger, which would have hurled both ships into a storm of fighting and changed a bit of history when Lieutenant Cowel chanced to spy him. Before Nick could press the trigger, Cowel sent him sprawling with a blow of the fist.

The *Phæbe*, threatened as she was, was manœuvring out of her delicate position with great skill. The men behind the guns of the *Essex*, watching her yards to see if they touched the rope-yarn, which would permit them to fight her, saw her long yards sweep over their decks, missing their own ropes by less than a fathom as she drifted astern, and saw her at last quite clear of them. A mutter of disappointment went up from them as she drifted farther away, took the wind in her sails once more, paid off, and slipped down a half mile to leeward, where she anchored.

"I could have bored a hole the length of her," growled Joel Hawes, giving the gun-carriage a knock with his heel in his disgust.

Two days later Captain Hillyar met Captain Porter in the streets of Valparaiso. The Englishman thanked the American for his forbearance on the day the *Phæbe* arrived in port, and told him that since he had been so scrupulous to observe the neutrality of

the port in trying circumstances, he himself would not consider it honorable to be less scrupulous in the matter.

Nevertheless, Captain Porter did not have much faith in the man's good intentions. He was certain that the British officers had been ordered to take the *Essex* without risk, and he could not believe that they would let slip this chance, while he was cooped up in the harbor. He felt that it would only be a question of time until they would attempt to take him. He was informed, too, that more vessels were on the way. Surely, if the *Phoebe* and *Cherub* should be reinforced, they would not wait much longer on a formality of international law.

Days slipped into weeks, and still the British vessels stood guard over him. Sometimes they anchored close to the harbor entrance ; other times they cruised up and down off the harbor, but so close to it that he could not slip out. Captain Porter was certain that they were merely waiting for the arrival of the other British ships before descending upon him. He made up his mind that he would not let the *Essex* die like a rat in a trap. He would take the first opportunity to get out to sea ; or, if no chance came along, he would make one.

He had already made a feint or two at getting past them, in which he had discovered two facts of importance. The *Essex* could outsail and outpoint either of the enemy's ships, and the *Phoebe* was faster than her companion. This meant much to him. In

the first place, it meant that he would stand a better chance to get out than he would have had if either of the others were faster than the *Essex*. And it meant that if the two should follow, which he made no doubt they would, he could run ahead until the *Phæbe* had left her consort far behind, and then he could turn and fall on Captain Hillyar and fight it out with him alone.

It was now six weeks since the British vessels had arrived at Valparaiso. Captain Porter decided that he would wait no longer for an opportunity to slip through. Hillyar was too wary. He would set a day in which to make the trial. He would make the trial the next afternoon. No, he would try it this afternoon; he would not get into the habit of the Spanish American, who puts everything off until to-morrow. "Mañana, mañana," they say, as they squat in the sun by the side of the road.

Now the wind played its first trick on the *Essex*. Captain Porter had no sooner decided to start immediately on his attempt to get out, than a savage draught came down out of the Cordilleras and blew a squall. The wind was so strong that it was not a good time to carry out the plan. Captain Porter would have to wait, after all.

But here the wind played a second trick. As if it knew what it was doing, and meant some mischief, it immediately commenced to blow harder than ever. It was not long until it had put such a strain on the port anchor of the frigate that the cable parted.

One anchor would not hold the vessel, and she began to drive out to sea, dragging her starboard anchor over the hard bottom. Porter made up his mind at once to make the most of the accident, and pass out to sea. With this end in view, he strained on all the canvas the *Essex* could carry in the wind and stood for the harbor entrance.

Everything was going nicely, and there was good prospect of his getting clear of the British frigates, when the wind played trick number three. Crouching behind Point of Angels until the *Essex* came along, a great squall rushed out upon the spread of canvas and tore at it with its shrill fingers. The good old *Essex* heeled over under the sudden blast until her guns were almost under. Men were sent aloft to take in sail. They were busy at the task when the wind brought trick number three to a climax by wrenching the maintopmast off of the *Essex* just above the top and carrying it, yards and all, into the sea. All the men who were on the yard at the time furling sail were drowned.

Crippled by the loss of mast and sails, Porter gave up trying to get past the British ships outside, and turned back to make his anchorage. But the wind was ready with trick number four; it hauled just enough to make it hard work for the *Essex* to win back. The vessel did not behave well with her maintopmast gone, and all the sails above it, and the wreckage of them dragging overside in the water made her cranky to steer. The best Porter could do

was to run into a little bay on the west side of the harbor and anchor there close to shore, three-quarters of a mile in the lee of a Chilean battery.

Porter had not much hope that the Englishmen would leave him alone after his attempt to get out, and he had not much hope that the Chilean battery would try to enforce the principle of neutrality against the British frigate and sloop-of-war, but he was going to give them a chance to do it.

The *Essex* was made ready for immediate defense. Porter knew that the fight would be desperate. When the *Essex* was last in her home port, before she set out on this cruise, the authorities at Washington had seen fit to take twenty long twelve-pounders away from her battery of twenty-six. The twenty long guns had been replaced by sixteen thirty-two pound carronades. It may seem at first that a gun throwing a ball weighing thirty-two pounds could do more damage than a gun throwing a ball weighing only twelve pounds, and in a measure that is true. But the gun throwing the twelve-pound shot is a longer gun than the other, and can throw its shot farther. Carronades had to be fought at close range. They could not reach an enemy that was armed with long guns, and chose to stand off and use them. And that was precisely what the English boats were armed with. They had thirty-six long twelves against the six that had been left on the *Essex* by the authorities at Washington.

Porter had objected to the change in his guns

when it was made, but the objection had had no weight with the men at home, who knew all about sea fighting from pictures they had seen and books they had read. Now the American officer wished for his long twelves as he never wished for anything in his life. He knew what the enemy carried, and he knew that the enemy could stand off and beat him to a pulp with the long guns. He would be helpless; he could not run in and close with his carronades, because his maintopmast was gone, and all above it. The third trick the wind had played on him had been one too many. But this was not the time to mourn about things that had already happened, and the *Essex* made ready to meet the enemy and to do the best she could.

"We'll have our stomach full of fighting this day, I'm thinkin'," said an Irish gunner in Joel Hawes's gun crew.

Joel looked at him savagely, thinking the man was already flinching; but the fellow's face was as calm and serene as a mill-pond in June. He had merely stated a fact, because it was a fact. They all knew that it was so; they all knew the odds, and that they would have a stomach full of fighting before they were through, and they all took it as calmly as Joel's Irishman.

The two British ships came swooping down under full canvas on the helpless cripple, their men at their guns, all flags flying in the breeze. The wind was playing no tricks with them. And little they cared

for the laws of nations ! They had been sent out to exterminate this pest of the western sea, and they were going to do it now, before it had another chance to get away. If they could not do it one way, they would do it another.

Barnewell, the sailing-master of the *Essex*, was trying to get a hawser around the anchor chain that was holding the *Essex*, so that they might drag her around until her broadside was aimed in the direction whence the British ships were driving on her. Sailors call such a line a "spring-line." Barnewell was trying to get a "spring-line" on the cable. Nick Haydock was helping him. Much depended on that spring-line. If they could not get it fast in time, the two attacking vessels could take a position raking the *Essex*, and she would be helpless to reply to them. David Farragut, midshipman, twelve years old, was watching them.

A puff of smoke leaped from the bows of the *Phæbe* and was jerked away by the breeze. The breeze had done its tricks now—some of them—and was laughing over the water, waiting its chance for the fifth and final trick it meant to play on the American frigate. The dull boom of the gun came over the waves, and a shot thudded against the ribs of the American vessel. The fight was on.

The *Phæbe* took a position under the stern of the *Essex* ; not an American gun could be brought to bear on her. It was just what Porter expected ; it was what the spring-line that Barnewell was work-

ing with was intended to prevent. "Boom! Boom!" A dozen spurts of smoke from the *Phæbe*, the shriek of hurtling shot, and their thumps against the sides of the frigate.

"Curse 'em for cowards!" cried the men at the broadside guns of the *Essex*, beside themselves with wrath, trying to twist their pieces around to bear. Men were falling everywhere, and their companions dragged them below to the cockpit, and hurried on deck again to their useless guns, where they could do nothing but wait their turn to be shot down. It was maddening!

Joel Hawes was having better luck. The *Cherub*, stealing to a position off the *Essex's* bows, and opening with her long guns, had fallen under his range. He crouched over the breech of his long twelve, ran his eye through the sights, stepped back, nodded, and the gun leaped stiff legged into the air with a sharp roar.

The first answer had been made to the fire of the enemy. A cheer went up from the throats of the American sailors. They were relieved; they could strike back a little, at least. Three guns on the bows could be brought to bear on the *Cherub*; they barked sharp and fast.

Some one came to the captain on the quarter-deck, saluted, and reported that the spring on the cable was all fast. It was David Farragut, midshipman. Captain Porter gave the order to haul in on it. The men laid to; the spring tautened, swung dripping in

a narrowing zone, and snapped, parted by a chance shot from the enemy. No doubt the wind, full of its tricks, swerved that shot just enough to bring it against the slender strand that meant a measure of safety to the *Essex*. Who can tell? But we do not count that against the wind; we are not certain the wind did that. We only know that the wind was guilty of other things that day, and worse.

The *Phoebe* was firing rapidly. Her shot rattled through the sides of the *Essex* and swept across her decks. Men were falling faster and faster. It was deadly to stand idle and be shot down, unable to strike back. Only on the bows was there firing. There Joel and his men, and the two other long twelves were pounding away at the *Cherub*.

Captain Porter, on the quarter-deck, alert, calm, waited until the spring could be got on the cable again.

A shot entered the port of Joel's gun. It struck the piece a glancing blow and smashed into the head of the Irish gunner. He had had his fill of fighting soon. Harry Hotchkiss stepped forward with a charge of powder in his arms, to place it in the muzzle of the gun.

Midshipman Farragut was standing by the side of Captain Porter on the quarter-deck. Some one came and reported a gunner skulking. Captain Porter turned to the midgy, a lad of twelve. "Do your duty, sir," he said.

"Aye, aye, sir!" returned the lad of twelve,

and went off, a pistol in his hand, to shoot the skulker.

A cheer from the forward guns pierced the muffled "Boom! Boom!" from the British ships. The *Cherub* was drawing away. The bows forward had found her with their iron fists, and were punching hard. Joel, crouched for a final shot, arose, and waved his cap, leading another cheer.

A second spring was made fast to the cable; a second time the men hauled in, and a second time a shot, swerved, perhaps, by the wind, cut it away as the vessel was beginning to veer around to the pull, so that her guns could bear on the enemy.

Now both the *Phoebe* and the *Cherub* were astern of the American, pouring iron into her without retort. The decks were horrible. Dead lay in heaps. Blood sloshed in the scuppers, gritty with the sand that had been sprinkled on deck to keep them from becoming slippery. The *Essex* was taking water through numerous holes between wind and wave. The cockpit was filled with wounded. Their shrieks and curses, their groans and sobs, were the only sounds of war on the stricken vessel. You forget that part of it when you are fighting yourself, but if you are standing idle, waiting for your turn to come, you cannot forget it. It is to you the only real part of war at such a time.

Captain Porter, on the quarter-deck, gave a command. Men hurried forward and dragged three long twelves the length of the ship, and thrust their

muzzles through the stern ports. In a moment the defenders felt the thrilling shiver of their recoil run through the decks of the vessel. They cheered again. If only their carronades would carry, there was still hope for them! Hope? There was certainty if only their carronades would carry!

A third spring was got out and bent to the cable, and a third time it was shot away.

But the fight was not so bad now. The British fire slackened a bit. Not much; it was hard to be sure that it slackened at all, but it seemed to those who were waiting that the "Boom! Boom!" did not come so rapidly.

A half hour passed. Surely, the British fire was slacking off. There could be no doubt now.

Another cheer, louder, more exultant than the others, rang from the deck of the *Essex*. It was so exultant that it was answered from the cockpit by a feeble few lying wounded there. They did not know what the cheer was for, but they answered it, because it sounded like the cheer of victory.

And it was, for the two English vessels were drawing away. They had had enough. The three guns in the after port of the *Essex* bit too deeply for them.

The belief in victory was short-lived. The British frigates, going down the wind a short distance, wore, and came back, firing as they came. That was their answer to the cheer that had gone up from the *Essex*. They had heard the note of triumph in it, far down the wind, and had turned back to set the Americans

right in the matter. Having showed them that they were still fighting, and intended to keep on fighting, they drew off a second time to repair rigging, which was in bad shape. The Americans could see the British sailors squirreling about in the rigging.

It was not long before they came on again, crowding down on their helpless victim. This time they both took position off the port quarter of the *Essex*, away from the guns that had nibbled at their ribs so uncomfortably. They hauled up at long range, the *Phoebe* anchoring, and the *Cherub* standing off and on firing her bow guns.

Not one gun on the *Essex* would bear. Captain Porter, watching everything, gave another order. Sailors ran here and there, laying hold of ropes and halliards. "Shiver my timbers, if the old man isn't going to go after them!" cried Nick, joyfully, as he grasped the foretopsail weather sheet with a half dozen other sailors and began to pull away on it.

The rope hung for a moment, and then came running through the pulleys, offering no resistance to their pulling. A loose, raveled end of it whirled to the deck and twisted itself still. It had been shot away.

Every bit of the running rigging had been shot away, excepting the flying jib halliard. They soon found that out, trying to get sail on her. They used the one rope they had, and hauled up the flying jib. They loosed the foretopsail, and it came flapping down. But there was neither tack nor sheet for either sail, and no time to reave and bend new ones.

The sails, not sheeted home, flapped in the wind ; in the wind that had been playing tricks, and was ready to play more, perhaps, if need be.

Slowly, like a great bird wounded to death, the *Essex* drifted down on the two adversaries. It was a last desperate chance, and Captain Porter was the man to take that chance. No doubt there were a dozen, a score of American captains who would have taken the same desperate chance, but Porter happened to be the one called on this time.

If he could bring his carronades into play, he hoped to be able to drive off the two, crippled as he was. His men thought the same. They did not look at the heaps of dead and mangled about them ; they did not heed the puddles of blood that their footsteps tracked about the guns ; they did not hear the screams of pain from the cockpit, where the surgeons had no rest. They only thought of the coming chance to get the enemy under those carronades.

At last the moment arrived ; they were up with the British ships ; their carronades could bear. All along her sides the *Essex* leaped into fire, hurling iron into her adversaries. For a space she shook with the rapid firing of her guns.

But only for a space. The *Cherub*, feeling the drubbing, drew away. The *Phæbe* followed her. They would take no chances ; they would worry their adversary to death at long range. Like two terriers, they would throw their teeth into her ribs and be off before she could turn to bite back.

The Americans shouted angrily after them ; they had no weapons they could use except their tongues. They called their brothers of England cowards, using many adjectives. They were not cowards. They were only trying to win the fight, which, after all, is the object of all fighting.

Joel Hawes stood at his gun, idle once more. Three times his crew had been swept to death by the shots of the enemy. Only he remained unhurt. He looked along the decks of the *Essex*. They were running with blood. Bodies, torn by splinters, mangled by shots, lay in heaps. The wounded, under the hands of the surgeons in the cockpit, shouted out words of cheer and encouragement between their groans. The cockpit had been the scene of many horrors that day. Some of the shots of the enemy had reached it, killing the wounded as the doctors fought to save their lives.

They were drifting back to their anchorage in the lee of the Chilean battery. Captain Porter was determined that the *Essex* should not fall into the hands of the British ; he was using what sail he had to drive her on the beach, where he intended to burn her, and escape with what was left of the crew.

She was making way slowly but surely toward the shore. In a short time she would be close enough ; they could fire her and swim to the land. The British ships were following, but at a distance. They could not come up in time.

Then the wind played its fifth and last trick.

Waiting until the hopes of the Americans were high; waiting until there were only a few fathoms more for the *Essex* to float over, it suddenly veered and blew straight in the face of the drifting frigate. The remnants of the sails flapped back; her headway stopped, and she commenced to slide slowly backward toward the oncoming enemy.

A small boat was coming out of the harbor from the *Essex Junior*. The *Essex Junior* had been ordered to keep out of the fight. It was only an old whaling ship fixed over to do service against merchantmen; it could not fight with a frigate. But Lieutenant Downes could stand it no longer; he was coming aboard to see what he could do.

Lieutenant Downes came aboard. Captain Porter called a conference of the officers. Only one responded, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur McKnight. Only one could. The others were killed. Lieutenant Wilmer had been knocked into the water by a splinter and drowned. Lieutenant Cowell had died of a desperate wound; his leg had been shot off. His life might have been saved by prompt attention, but when the surgeon was going to leave the work he was doing to attend to him, Lieutenant Cowell would not permit it. "No, doctor, none of that," he said. "Fair play's a jewel. One man's life is as dear as another's; I would not cheat any poor fellow out of his turn." Barnewell, sailing-master, had fainted from his wounds and loss of blood.

The three officers talked on the quarter-deck in

low tones ; the British ships were drawing near ; already they were beginning to fire again. They decided that one chance remained. They would get out the sheet-anchor. Perhaps the wind, which had veered, as has been told, would drive away the enemy and give the *Essex* a chance to breathe. Porter ordered the anchor over, and Lieutenant Downes left for the *Essex Junior*, carrying off some of the wounded, and leaving three sailors he had brought with him, who insisted on dying with the old ship. The British fired on the small boat as it put back to the *Essex Junior*, but did not hit it.

The storm of iron was sweeping over them again. Acting Lieutenant Odenheimer, superintending the catting of the sheet-anchor, was struck by a huge, whirling splinter and knocked into the bay.

The anchor splashed into the water ; the cable rumbled through the hawser holes. The *Essex* checked her sternway, and swung around. The carronades were ranging into line again. Hope revived. And then, just as a murderous storm of shot broke over the decks of the frigate from the oncoming enemy, it died again. The hawser parted, and the *Essex* began to drift once more upon the British frigates, unmanageable, helpless.

Hawes heard the voice of Bissly, the Scotchman, at the next gun. He turned from watching the *Phoebe*, working carefully up toward them. Bissly's face was as white as the breast of a gull, and as free from expression. He was standing on one leg,

leaning against the gun-carriage. The stump of the other leg hung in the air. A knotted handkerchief had been twisted about it to stop the flow, but the blood ran in a stream from where the man stood. "I left my own country and adopted the United States to fight for her," Bissly said. "I hope I have this day proved myself worthy of the country of my adoption. I am no longer of any use to her, or to you, so good-bye." Before a hand could stop him he hopped to the gun-port, twisted himself through it, and fell into the water.

Joel turned away with a lump in his throat and a moist eye. His glance fell on the face of young Hotchkiss, pierced by the sliver that had killed him. The look with which he had died was still on his features. Joel clenched his hands and held a cry of rage in his throat. It was butchery ; it was not a fair fight to stand off like that and slaughter, without giving a chance for a return.

Then, with a great smothered roar, the entire ship lurched and leaped, as though she would leave the water. Great volumes of smoke poured from the hatchways. Men rushed on deck. A magazine, with what little powder was left in it, had blown up. And they were still drifting helplessly on the enemy, who still fired into them without ceasing.

Captain Porter, cool, calm, infinitely sad, looked down the hatches, where he could see the flames flickering in the wake of the explosion, and glanced at the approaching ships of the enemy, still firing

into them. "Those who wish to leave the ship may jump overboard and swim to shore," he said, and the word was passed.

Although the flames were beginning to tongue through the hatches, although the British were upon them, although the frigate was shot to pieces in the body, and her sailing gear was a mass of tangled wreckage, only a few left the ship. They would rather die at their posts.

But David Porter would not ask the last sacrifice of those that were left. Already fifty-eight had been killed and sixty-six wounded, out of the crew of two hundred and fifty-five. Sadly the great heart gave up, and surrendered the ship.

And the wind, which had played such tricks on the frigate *Essex*, carried the last wisp of smoke from the silent guns out upon the great sea where the craft had won undying glory.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHEESE-BOX

THE night of March 8, 1862, was a heavy night at Washington, and throughout the Northern states. That day a fighting monster of a ship had come out of the Elizabeth River and destroyed two of the Union ships in Hampton Roads, and no one could think of anything to prevent her returning in the morning to destroy the rest. She was an invincible monster, with great guns protected by a thick hide of iron, and a ram that tore huge holes in the sides of the wooden ships that were opposed to her. No one could see what would prevent her from making away with the Union fleet; the entire North expected that she would be able to steam up to Washington, lay the city in ashes, and devastate the Atlantic seaboard. It was a night of hopelessness and of panic.

The monster that had struck such terror through the North was the old steam frigate *Merrimac* which had been burned when the Federal government abandoned and destroyed the navy-yard at Portsmouth, in Virginia, early in the war. The Confederates had taken what was left of her, cut her down to the berth deck, and built a casemate over her of heavy timber, faced with four inches of iron. They

had filled her with guns, and fitted her with a beak of iron with which to ram her enemies. They had called her the *Virginia*, and we will speak of her by that name, although she is usually known in history by her former name, the *Merrimac*.

On the eighth of March she had steamed out from the Elizabeth Rivers and descended upon the fleet. She had sunk the frigate *Cumberland* of thirty guns, which had gone down fighting, and set fire to the *Congress*, of forty guns, after a hopelessly one-sided contest. The wooden ships had been powerless against her; their shot had dribbled off her iron sides, doing no damage.

There was only one slim hope that her career of destruction might be arrested. The hope was faint; pinned on a trifle. For a long time a man named John Ericsson, an engineer and inventor, had dreamed a dream about a war vessel that should be able to cope with anything afloat. This man was a Dane. He had got his first idea from watching log rafts in Swedish lakes. These rafts had a little hut built on them for the raft-man. Ericsson's dream was to build a boat like a raft, and place on top of it a round iron tower to carry guns. He had submitted his plans in 1854 to Napoleon III, Emperor of France, hoping the French would use the craft against Russia, whom Ericsson hated with a racial hatred. But Napoleon had only laughed, and sent the visionary inventor about his Danish business.

When the Civil War had been under way for a

few months, and the Federal government learned that the Confederates were remodeling the old *Merrimac* into a new-fashioned ironclad, the Navy Department had bestirred itself to match the monster with another, and had asked for designs. Among the designs submitted was one by Ericsson for a tower on a raft such as he had long dreamed of.

His plan was laughed at. One of the three members of the naval board that was to pass on the designs submitted sent word that Ericsson might "take the little thing home and worship it, as it would not be idolatry, because it was in the image of nothing in the heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth." But in sheer desperation the board finally consented to have a boat built on Ericsson's design for trial, with the understanding that if it were not a success the money would be paid back to the United States.

That was enough for the inventor, and three months later the vessel was completed. Above her hull was built an overhanging platform, heavily armored with iron, so designed that only a foot of it extended above the water. On top of the platform was a round tower twenty feet wide and nine high, made of eight thicknesses of one-inch iron bolted together. The tower, or turret, was made to revolve by machinery, sliding about on a copper bearing. It had two gun-ports, and two eleven-inch guns. The tower was intended to be turned from the enemy while the guns, which were muzzle loaders, were

drawn in and loaded, and turned back to bring the guns to bear when they were ready to be fired. Forward the tower was a conning tower, extending four feet above the deck, made of heavy iron, with slits in it through which a view could be obtained of the enemy. Here was the wheel, and here the post of the commander ; he had to fight his ship through those narrow slits.

The engines, the galley, and living quarters, every part of the ship but the two towers and the smoke-stack, were in the hull, under the level of the water. The officers and crew had no light but lamps, and no air excepting what was brought to them by fans. All the gases from the fires under the boilers, all the smells of the engine and the galley, and all the foul air from the breathing men cooped up in the box, had to be cleaned out by the fans. It was a dismal and dangerous hole, one at which sailors shuddered. There was much doubt as to whether, in a seaway, the overhanging platform would not be torn away from the hull ; whether the craft was not top-heavy, and would not capsize ; whether, in fact, she would float at all. When the makers launched her they were so uncertain whether she would float that they built floats of wood to catch under her stern as it rushed down the ways. But she did float, and she was ready for a trial trip on the nineteenth of February. On the fourth of March her guns were mounted and a board of naval officers reported favorably on her.

At the request of Mr. Ericsson the new craft was called *The Monitor* ; for he believed she would be a monitor to the Confederates and to the powers in Europe that were looking on ; that she would warn and caution and advise them to respect the powers and resources of the United States of America. It was to this little craft, untried, laughed at by many, doubted by most, that the sole hope of the country turned.

There had been mad haste at the last to make her ready, when it was learned that the *Virginia* was nearing completion ; and on the sixth of March, two days before the Confederate ironclad appeared and spread havoc and alarm through the Union fleet, the *Monitor*, in tow of the tug *Seth Low*, steamed out upon the boisterous waters of the Atlantic.

They were not less than heroes who went with her that day ! Never before had craft like that ventured across the relentless waves of the high seas. In their memories was the knowledge of the wicked power of the boisterous water, and in their ears the echo of the doubts that had been raised against the *Monitor*. They could not be sure whether the worst that had been said might not be too true. Huddled into the black hole, cramped, helpless to save themselves from possible disaster, they placed their lives on the hazard, and waited.

It was not long before their fears were aroused. They ran into a wind and sea ; the waves broke over the deck, nearly awash, and swirled angrily about

the round turret. Water poured in torrents through the seam between turret and deck, which had been calked for the trip, but from which the hemp calking was torn by the yanking waves. Waves broke over the stack and wet the fires, nearly putting them out. The men had forgotten to stop the hawse holes, and solid water rushed in through them. The belts on the ventilating fans became wet, and slipped, shutting off the supply of air from the men and the engine fires. There was not enough steam to work the steam pumps, and the hand pumps were not strong enough to lift the water to the top of the turret, which was the only place it could be discharged. Gas from the engine accumulated; two men, trying to check it, were made unconscious, and saved only at great risk to their rescuers. Danger of foundering or of suffocating was intense, when the tug managed to drag the floundering craft inshore to smoother water. Luckily the wind was offshore. Once again before they reached Cape Henry they went through a rough sea that nearly foundered them. It was not until the afternoon of the eighth that they passed the Cape to safety. As they passed they heard the guns of the *Virginia* and her helpless victims, and knew they were none too soon. The glare of the burning *Congress* was in the sky as they steamed toward Hampton Roads.

The *Monitor* had been ordered to proceed to the defense of Washington, but the commander of the fleet exceeded his orders and held her to contest the

waters with the invincible enemy. She passed into the lee of the *Minnesota*, aground and expecting the attack of the *Virginia* in the morning. Exhausted though they were by the terrible trip from New York, the men spent the night in preparation for the battle, knowing that all the hope of the navy hung on their untried craft. They could not guess what another day would bring them, but they did not flinch from the trial. And the government at Washington, knowing that the *Monitor* had arrived at the fleet, breathed more easily ; it is human to hope when there is a chance for hope.

The mists of morning, breaking slowly from the shore, revealed the enemy, black and forbidding, against the background of Virginia. Black smoke presently began to pour from her funnels, and she was observed to swing slowly into the tide and make toward the *Minnesota*. At a distance of a mile she threw a shot toward the stricken ship which she had come forth to destroy. And then the men aboard her saw the little round box slip from the shelter of the larger craft and steal across toward them. The " Yankee cheese-box on a raft " had come to give them battle.

Think for a minute of those men in the cheese-box. Their boat was a complete experiment. There had never been another like her in war. And this one had never met even the weakest foe by way of trial. Her guns had never been fired from her turrets, and her turret had never received the impact of a blow.

They were going forth to grapple with a vessel of known strength ; one that had proved herself superior to anything afloat. Perhaps the first shot would come tearing through and catch them all cooped up in the iron box from which there was no escape. Or perhaps it would unsettle the turret so that it could not be stirred. And they could not even see their opponent. Nevertheless they went forth without flinching.

At a distance of half a mile, the *Virginia* fired her bow gun, but the shot went wild. One thing, at least, was in the favor of the men in the turret ; the cheese-box was hard to hit. Slowly the two drew together. The massy turret squealed on its bearings ; the huge guns bore on the iron sides of the enemy. They belched forth, leaping in their carriages. The floor of the turret jerked under the recoil, but there was only a muffled roar of the gun-fire in the ears of the men inside.

In the next instant the *Virginia* let go her starboard broadside ; the supreme moment of test had come. The shells rattled against the iron of the turret. The men inside looked about them with eager glances. All was well ; the shots had not come through, and the blows against the iron plating had done no harm to those within. Then the turret began to turn, and they knew that its bearings were not jammed. They took heart, reloading their guns with great good cheer.

It took them seven or eight minutes to load and



ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE MONITOR AND THE MERRIMAC

fire. Those inside saw nothing of their enemy except when the turret swung its ports toward her, when they caught a glimpse of her huge sides. In that glimpse they had to fire. Not knowing at what moment the other ship might appear in view through the ports, they had to wait with ready guns for the instant, and then discharge their weapons. It was shooting on the fly.

Peeking through the ports in these glimpses, they saw with sinking heart that their shots were doing little or no damage. The tremendous resisting strength of the other threw off the eleven-inch shot as easily as it had thrown off the ten-inch shot the day before. Nevertheless they kept on firing, taking courage from the fact that their own craft was still exempt from injury.

Lieutenant Worden, the commander, in the pilot house, peeking through the slits, perceived that he was doing no harm, and manœuvered to ram his enemy. This way and that the two jockeyed, the pigmy and the giant, seeking for advantage, and firing as they swung about. Presently, with a rush, the tiny craft hurled herself toward the stern of the other, hoping to disable the propeller or steering gear. The blow missed the mark by two feet, and the *Monitor* slid off. But in the instant of impact an eleven-inch shot from her turret found the walls of the *Virginia*, broke through the plates, and mashed the wood, barely stopping short of entering the case-mate. The blow threw all the Confederate gunners

from their guns, and the concussion started their noses and ears to bleeding.

The difficulty in aiming at the *Virginia* increased with every shot. Broad white marks had been made on the stationary floor on which the turret swung to show which was the bow and which the stern of the vessel, but these had become covered with soot and grime until they were invisible. Those inside could only guess which way they were going, and where the enemy bore; it did them no good now to learn that she was off the port bow, or the starboard quarter. Through all the arc of the turret's swing they had to watch for the enemy, with nothing to hint to them when it might wheel into view. And there was great danger of their mistaking their own pilot house in the smoke; danger that an excited gunner might throw one of the huge shot into it, and win the fight for the enemy. At the same time, they grew dizzy and confused; the fumes of their guns were choking them. But they kept on.

Finding that she could accomplish nothing against the cheese-box, the *Virginia* bore off and started for the *Minnesota*, aground on the shoals at the edge of the channel. Three times she sent shot and shell into the wooden hull of the helpless adversary, doing terrible damage; but after the third the little *Monitor*, dogging at her heels, caught up with her and made her turn.

Maddened by the nagging attack, Lieutenant Jones, commander of the *Virginia*, tried to ram. The

bow of the *Virginia* struck the flat platform, slid up upon it, and sheered off, pushing the *Monitor* away. The only harm done was to the bottom of the ramming vessel.

Failing that, the Confederates prepared to board, but when the time came for them to make the attempt, the *Monitor* slipped into shallow water, where the other could not follow, and was safe.

It was then that the Confederates first picked up heart; for it was then that the *Monitor* drew out of the fight. They thought the little cheese-box had had enough, and were of good cheer. But they did not know. The *Monitor's* ammunition was fed from the hold through a scuttle in the main deck into a scuttle in the floor of the turret. It could be passed through only when the two scuttles were one over the other. All the ammunition on deck had been used up, and it was necessary to withdraw, bring the two scuttles together, and pass up more before continuing the fight.

That done, the *Monitor* returned, like the bulldog that she was, to fasten her teeth again in the mastiff. Lieutenant Jones, despairing of accomplishing anything against the turret, ordered the fire of the guns to be directed toward the pilot house. A swarm of mighty shot hurled against the iron barricade. One of them, bursting at one of the slits through which Lieutenant Worden was looking, filled his eyes and face with burnt powder and iron dust, blinding him, and causing him to reel with pain. Believing that

the blow had destroyed the pilot house, Worden ordered the *Monitor* to haul off.

They took him below into the cabin, leading him blinded down the passages. "Is the *Minnesota* saved?" he asked.

They told him that it was.

"Thank God!" he cried. "Then I can die."

Lieutenant Greene, taking command, hurried to the pilot house to see what damage had been done. He found that the wheel was still intact, and that the iron barricade was whole. Learning that, he started back into the fight. It was then noon.

But the *Virginia*, seeing the other draw off when Worden was wounded, had believed that she had quit, and had started back for her berth behind the Confederate forts on the Virginia shore. Greene followed and threw three shots after her, to let the enemy know that he was still ready for more. But the enemy had had enough. The little cheese-box had done her work well.

The *Virginia* did not molest the Union vessels again. Once she came out, offering battle, but the *Monitor*, under orders from Washington to fight only in case of absolute necessity, did not accept the challenge. And so the fleet, and Washington, and New York, and, perhaps, the country, were saved.

The *Virginia* was afterward destroyed by the Confederates when Norfolk was abandoned to the Federal forces, and the *Monitor* sank in a storm off

Cape Hatteras, on her way to the southern Atlantic coast.

But the deeds they did, and the fight they fought,
will live forever.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAN IN THE RIGGING

YOU have heard, of course, how David Glascoe Farragut climbed into the rigging of the *Hartford*, his flag-ship at the Battle of Mobile Bay, and directed the fight from above the smoke, and you have thought it was a very brave thing for him to stay up there, exposed to view and the fire of Fort Morgan and the enemy's ships. It *was* a brave thing for him to do. A man must be very brave to go into such a struggle of great guns and keep his wits about him, seeing everything and deciding upon the right thing to do each moment.

Perhaps, as a matter of fact, he was in less danger in the rigging than he would have been on the quarter-deck, swept with flying slivers and the heavy shot of the enemy. The Confederate gunners were not aiming at the rigging of his ship, and they could not see him where he stood because of the smoke. Of course he did not go into the rigging because there was less danger there, but because he could see better what was going on; he thought of the danger neither one way nor another.

But let me tell you of two other things he did that day that were much braver than that.

Mobile Bay is shaped like a huge bell, thirty miles long and twenty wide at the bottom, which is toward the Gulf of Mexico. The bottom of the bell, next the gulf, is almost entirely closed by islands and shoals which leave only a narrow passage through which large ships can pass. This channel runs between two of the islands; Dauphin Island to the west, and Edith's Hammock to the east, passing two miles from the first, but only a few hundred yards from the second.

The Confederates had seized and strengthened the forts that the United States government had built long before on these islands, calling the one, on Dauphin Island, Fort Gaines, and the other, Fort Morgan. They were both tremendously strong forts. The Confederates had driven piles into the bottom from Fort Gaines almost to the edge of the channel, and from the end of the line of piles they had planted torpedoes in three rows, carrying them into the channel. At the end of the rows of torpedoes was a red buoy; it was necessary to pass between that buoy and Fort Morgan to gain the bay from the gulf, which brought any vessel that tried to get through right up to the guns of Morgan. The guns were so many and so heavy that it was almost hopeless for a ship to pass without being sunk.

Inside the bay, anchored near Fort Morgan, the Confederates had an iron-clad ram, the *Tennessee*, that was stronger than any vessel afloat. She was

made of heavy thicknesses of pine and oak covered with five inches of iron. The sides slanted backward at an angle of forty-five degrees, so that balls that struck against them would glance off into the air. Her body was so stout with heavy beams of wood that she could not be injured by being run into and rammed. She carried six guns, two on each side and one each at the bow and stern. The guns were fired through ports in her slanting sides, which could be covered by sliding five-inch plates of iron. And she had a terrible ram at her bows. She was a much more savage fighter than the *Virginia*, that had played havoc with the United States fleet in Hampton Roads two years before ; there was nothing in the Union navy that could contend with her, excepting, perhaps, some of the monitors, of which a number had been built since the original *Monitor* saved the fleet in Virginia waters.

One of the things that had quite as much to do with ending the Civil War as anything else was the blockade of Southern ports by the Northern navy. The entire coast was patrolled to prevent ships from going in and out. The Southerners could not send out their cotton and sugar to sell, or bring in the things they needed in carrying on the war. That is, it was intended that they should not be able to do so. As a matter of fact, many vessels, built for the purpose, did go in and out of the Southern ports carrying trade, and the blockade was not complete. It was Farragut's problem to get past the forts

guarding the entrance to Mobile Bay and obtain control of the bay, so that no more vessels could slip in and out at that point, which, after the fall of New Orleans, was one of the most important ports in the entire South.

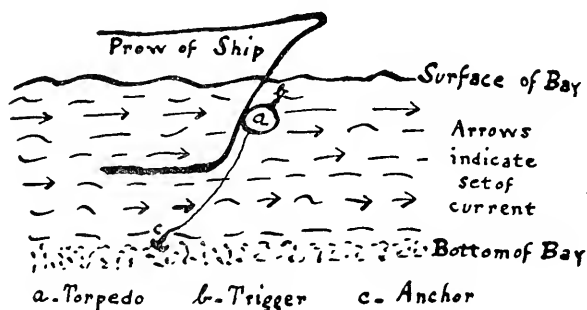
To accomplish this purpose he had a fleet of wooden war vessels which stood no chance against the Confederate ram *Tennessee*. He begged the government to send him some monitors, and to supply a land force to help hold the bay after he should get inside. But it was many months before these things were done. If Washington had acted at once, Farragut could have gone in before the ram was completed, and before the forts had been made as strong as they were at the time of the fight. Early in August a small army came, and four monitors, two of them with two turrets, and Farragut was ready.

He planned to make the attempt on the fourth of August, but something prevented. That night he was ill, and slept but little. He wanted two things to help him in. One was a wind from the west or southwest, which would blow the smoke of battle into the eyes of the gunners in Fort Morgan so that they could not see where to aim. Fort Gaines was so far away that it did not count. The other thing he needed was a flood-tide.

The flood-tide has to do with one of the brave things he did. Let me show you how. The torpedoes that the Confederates had planted in three

rows as far as the red buoy, to force into the clutches of Fort Morgan any vessel that passed, were fitted with triggers to set them off. These triggers were arranged on the tops of the torpedoes, which were made of barrels or large tin tubs. A vessel striking against them would spring the trigger and explode the torpedo.

What has that to do with a flood-tide? I will tell you. Of course you know that a flood-tide running in through the mouth of a gulf or bay sets up a strong current. Farragut knew how the torpedoes were made, and he knew that they were anchored by cables to the bottom. He figured that if the tide was running in strong, the torpedoes would be dragged by it and would swing on their cables, which would pull them down on a slant, and partly turn them over, so that the triggers, which were on top of the torpedoes, would be held away from ships coming down the tide from outside the bay. Like this :



Also, of course, the strong tide would help carry the vessels in, if they should be crippled by the fire from the fort.

It was easy enough to take advantage of the flood-tides ; there were two a day, and they came at pretty definite times, unless the wind happened to fight them down and delay them. One of the flood-tides, everybody knew, would be strong at five or six o'clock the next morning. But no one could tell when the wind would be blowing from the west or southwest.

At three o'clock on the morning of August fifth, Farragut, half sick and restless, was visited in his cabin by the steward.

"Which way is the wind?" he asked.

The steward, being only a steward, hadn't noticed. He went up on deck to observe, and came down to report that it was westerly.

"Good!" exclaimed Farragut. "We'll go in this morning."

Presently little silver whistles began to tinkle through the fleet, piping all hands. The fighting men came running on deck, eager for battle, bringing with them their hammocks, which they hung and piled around them to protect themselves as well as possible from the swarms of splinters that would soon be flying about, torn and scattered by the Confederate guns.

Every preparation had been made for the passage of the fort. The commanders of the several vessels

of the fleet had protected and strengthened their ships in every way they could, with iron plates, and chains, and bags of sand ; one of the boats had a breastwork of sand-bags behind her sides running from bow to stern. All the guns that could be accommodated were dragged to the starboard side of the ships, which would be next the fort.

The fleet steamed in pairs ; each of the larger vessels had one of the smaller lashed to her on the outside, away from the fort. This served two purposes. The smaller would be protected from almost certain destruction by being sheltered, and at the same time would be able to tow the larger through the fire if it should become disabled.

Farragut had been prevailed upon to permit the *Brooklyn*, a large wooden ship, to lead the fleet. In approaching the passage it was necessary to run head on toward the fort for a distance, and the *Brooklyn* had more bow guns that could be brought to bear than the flag-ship. The *Hartford* came next in line. The four monitors steamed a little ahead of the others, and to the right, nearer the fort. The other vessels, ten more pairs in all, came in line behind, in divisions of four pairs. In that order they crossed the bar in the early morning, and moved toward the fort.

One of the monitors, the *Tecumseh*, in advance, fired two fifteen-inch shells at the fort without reply. Her commander, Captain T. A. M. Craven, seeing the ram *Tennessee* poke her nose from behind the

fort and pass leisurely across to the westward, turned to follow, neglecting the red buoy that marked the end of the rows of torpedoes. He had his instructions to destroy the ram, and he set out to do it, let the torpedoes be where they might.

Farragut meanwhile had climbed into the main rigging to be clear of the smoke. His own vessel, and the *Brooklyn* ahead of him, were now roaring with their great guns at the enemy's fort; the rat-lines shook and twanged with the recoil. Farragut, seeing everything, saw the water lift and boil under the bow of the *Tecumseh*, saw her fling her nose from right to left, and lurch under the waves. She had been blown up by a torpedo, and had carried nearly a hundred men to the bottom with her. Captain Craven, in the pilot house with the pilot, had stood aside to let the other escape. When his turn came it was too late; he was drowned with the others.

The battle was now in full blast. The fort was hurling its shot and shell and canister into the Union ships, right under its nose, and those that could bring their guns to bear were replying. A great cloud of sulphurous smoke drifted between the vessels and the fort.

Suddenly the *Brooklyn*, in advance, stopped and began to back. Farragut saw it coming toward the *Hartford*, stern first. He hailed, and learned that she was trying to escape the fate that had just met the *Tecumseh*. Then he did a very brave thing.

"Damn the torpedoes!" he said. "Follow me!"

And without stopping to count the risk he headed his ship outside the buoy directly across the nest of torpedoes that had been planted to destroy them.

Her men, seeing what was taking place, waited with set faces for the blow from beneath that they expected would destroy them. They waited for it, but they did not flinch. As they waited, they could hear the grating of the deadly weapons beneath the water as the hull ran over them; those in the ammunition room below heard the horrid things scraping the bottom. Up in the ratlines, with a line about his body tying him to the shrouds, placed there by order of the vessel's captain, stood Farragut, seeing everything, thinking nothing of the torpedoes.

Behind the *Hartford* came the *Richmond*. The *Brooklyn*, still floundering about, got in the way. The *Richmond* was forced to back to avoid a collision. In backing she bore off and brought her broadside fully to bear on the fort. Out sprang a storm of shot and shell and canister that tore through the embrasures of the fort, driving the men from the guns, and slackening the enemy's fire. At last the two got free of each other and followed the *Hartford* over the field of mines. The *Hartford* was now a mile ahead. The din was furious.

Coming toward them, formidable, frightful, was the ram *Tennessee*, stronger than any vessel in their fleet; stronger than the *Virginia* that had destroyed

the *Cumberland* and *Congress* in Hampton Roads. Head on toward the *Hartford* she came. As she approached, the *Hartford*, quicker and faster than she, pulled to one side, avoiding her, and sending in a broadside that rattled against the iron protection and slid over her, or tumbled in fragments into the water. It seemed hopeless to try to cope with her. The ram turned to follow the flag-ship.

Nor was that the only danger that threatened Faragut. Three Confederate gunboats, mounting stern chasers, kept ahead of him, out of reach of his broadsides, and poured their raking fire along his decks. The ship was a shambles. Blood ran in her scuppers; splinters and shreds of human flesh filled the air, showering on the deck of the *Metacomet*, the consort that was lashed to her. The *Hartford* was helpless against them, having only one gun that would bear. But she kept on, drawing out of range of the fort.

Presently the ram, dogging at her heels, turned and passed down the line of approaching ships. The *Brooklyn* and *Richmond* meanwhile had cleared themselves and were coming on in support of the *Hartford*, now a mile ahead. She passed the *Brooklyn* with a broadside; one shell tore through and through the wooden sides of the Union vessel. The *Richmond* met her with a fire that disconcerted the ram's gunners, so that her answering shots went wide. She passed on until she came to the *Monongahela*, which tried to ram, but struck only a glance.

ing blow. The *Ossippee*, coming next, received two shot that pierced her. The *Oneida*, following, in crippled condition, was saved from a broadside only by the failure of the *Tennessee's* primers. Passing under the stern of the *Oneida*, the ram raked her, killing and wounding many, among them Captain Mullany, her commander, who lost an arm. She was about to rake again when the monitor *Winnebago*, which had been attending to the fort all this time, steamed in between them and engaged the *Tennessee*. The *Winnebago's* captain, Stevens, had been the captain of the *Oneida*, but had turned over command to Mullany, whose vessel was not suitable for such a fight. There were two turrets on the *Winnebago*. In one of them was a conning tower, from which the officers were supposed to direct the fighting. But Captain Stevens found it difficult to see all that was going on through the little slits provided for that purpose in the conning tower, and was out on deck, pacing between the two turrets, the only man visible about her, exposed to all the terrible fire that was rushing back and forth through the air.

At the head of the line the *Hartford* was having an easier time of it. As soon as the *Tennessee* had left off pursuit, Farragut ordered the *Metacomet* to cut loose and chase the gunboats that were playing havoc on the decks of the flag-ship, and Lieutenant Jouet, her commander, started after them, driving them up the bay. One of them was disabled and

run ashore near the fort, another escaped, but a third, the *Selma*, was overhauled and taken.

That ended the first round. The entire fleet passed Fort Morgan and joined the *Hartford*, four miles above. They knew the worst of it was not over; that the dreadful *Tennessee* yet remained to be destroyed, but for the present they could rest. The sailors fell to clearing up their ships, restoring order, washing off the blood. The odor of coffee filled their nostrils, and they heard the clatter of mess-gear being set out for their breakfast. It was then eight o'clock.

In the midst of preparations for breakfast came the alarm that the *Tennessee* was returning, and they saw her steaming up the bay toward them, trailing a long streamer of black smoke behind as she came. Then Farragut did the second brave thing of that day. Knowing perfectly well that she was stronger than any vessel he had; that her ram could crush through the sides of his vessels as though they had been paper, and that shot would rattle and tumble off her sides like hail, he nevertheless turned back to meet her. Coffee was forgotten; stains of blood were left uncleansed. There might well be more stains before they were done, or there might well be no need to wash them. Perhaps the waters of Mobile Bay would do that with incessant lapping.

"Destroy the ram," was the signal to the monitors.

"Ram the principal vessel of the enemy," was the

signal to the *Lackawanna*, the *Monongahela*, and the *Ossipee*, which lay nearer her than the others.

Right bravely did they turn to the attack. The *Monongahela* steamed into the *Tennessee* with a mighty rush, head on, striking her amidships and at right angles, receiving in the act two shells that tore through her. The blow did nothing to the ram. In a moment the *Lackawanna*, coming up from the other side, struck her a second blow, full, and at right angles. The *Tennessee* heeled over and swung around broadside to her antagonist, but no harm had been done her.

And now came the *Hartford*, under full steam, bearing down upon her enemy, Farragut on her decks, thinking only to destroy the formidable foe. But just as he came the *Tennessee* sheered off, so that she received only a glancing blow. . . . All the pounding shot the three were pouring against her iron sides only shattered themselves to pieces.

Now the monitors came up. The *Manhattan* hurled a fifteen-inch shot against the ram that broke through the iron and slivered the huge beams supporting it, but did not pass inside. The *Winnebago's* turret machinery was broken so that she had to turn in the water to bring the guns to bear, but the *Chickasaw*, the third monitor, with two turrets, was luckier. She fastened herself on the stern of the ram and began to chew with her great guns at the barrier that protected the men. Blow on blow fell against the massy walls of the craft; blows that

could not be returned, because the port-lids had become jammed and the guns could not be worked.

All about the ram were her unrelenting enemies, seeking to strike another blow. The *Hartford*, swinging wide to come at her again, was rammed by the *Lackawanna*, which tore a hole in her sides within two feet of the water line, and nearly killed Farragut, who was standing near. The Union vessels were so thick they could not get at their solitary victim.

Slowly the dogged *Chickasaw* began to wear down the will of the ram. Battered on all sides, wounded, unable to strike back, her smoke-stack gone, her fires falling, and the smoke pouring into the room where the brave defenders were struggling to make use of their guns, her plight was pitiable. Admiral Buchanan, directing the fight in person, called for a machinist to work on a pin of one of the port shutters. As the man was working to free it, a shot struck the shutter and the man was utterly crushed. And a bolt, flying off under the impact, broke Buchanan's leg.

For twenty long minutes more the brave men clung to hope. At the end of that time, unable to strike a single blow in their defense, with the stern wall of their floating fortress gradually crumbling under the teeth of the *Chickasaw*, they surrendered, and the fight was done. Mobile Bay was in the hands of the Union fleet.

But what would have been the end of the fight if

Farragut had not been a braver man than one who merely climbed into the ratlines of his ship to direct her fight? What if he had not had a courage that was above torpedoes, and above a monster fighting ship that could have picked off his own, one by one, at her leisure? Who can say?

CHAPTER IX

“ANOTHER STRIPE OR A COFFIN”

WILLIAM BARKER CUSHING, lieutenant in the United States Navy, was only a boy. Perhaps he would not have liked being called a boy, for he was twenty-one years of age at the time of which I write, but no one who had not the heart of a boy, with a boy's love for adventure and recklessness of death, would have done half the things he did.

Even if Cushing had never done the big thing of which I am going to tell he would have been well worth writing about. He was a thin slip of a lad, six feet tall, quick on his feet, athletic, wiry, with brown eyes full of laughter, and a merry voice. He did not know what fear was. That is a thing that is often said of men and boys, but it was strictly true of him. Danger meant nothing to him but fun. He thought no more of risking his life than you think of risking your little finger when you scoop up a hot grounder at short-stop. He was perfectly modest with it all. Not knowing that there was such an emotion as fear, it never occurred to him that he was braver than other men, or boys. He took it as a matter of course, just as he took his long legs and

brown eyes as a matter of course, and not things to be especially proud of.

The first thing Cushing did was when he was eighteen. He had been a cadet at Annapolis. He had resigned from the naval academy for some reason early in 1861, but volunteered in the navy early in the Civil War, and was made acting master's mate, and assigned to the North Atlantic blockading squadron. In that command he captured a Confederate tobacco schooner valued at \$30,000, the first capture by the United States Navy in the war. This happened on the first day of his active service with the North Atlantic blockading squadron.

By July, 1862, when he was not yet twenty, Cushing was made a lieutenant, for "acts of successful daring" on the blockade, and immediately proceeded to other acts of daring. He was with Rowan when that officer captured Elizabeth City, in North Carolina. One of the fruits of the capture was a small steamer, the *Ellis*. Cushing was put in command of the *Ellis*, and stationed off New River, lower down on the coast.

Thirty-five miles up New River was the town of Jacksonville. It lay on the mail route from Wilmington, North Carolina, one of the important seaports of the Confederacy, to Richmond, the Confederate capital. Somewhere near Jacksonville, according to report, was a salt works. The Confederate states were in distress for salt; nothing could hurt them much more than to cut off their supply of it.

They needed it so badly that the Confederate soldiers were often obliged to sprinkle gunpowder on their food in place of it.

Cushing decided that it would be a good move to destroy the salt works, and incidentally to capture Jacksonville and see whether there was any mail of importance in the post-office there. The thirty-five miles of river between him and the town ran through a country of which nothing more was known than that it was a red-hot secession country, and that the banks of the river were heavily wooded, offering a splendid chance for masked batteries and all sorts of hidden dangers.

But Cushing, of course, thought nothing of that. He set out up the river in the *Ellis*, with nothing on his mind but the capture of the town and the destruction of the salt works. As the expedition approached Jacksonville the men on the *Ellis* saw a dense column of smoke arising from the river beyond a bend, and believed that the Confederates had fired the town and left. They hurried forward. As they passed the bend they ran across a cotton schooner afire. It had been all ready to put to sea and take its chances in running the blockade, but Cushing's advance up the river had prevented it, so the owners of the cotton had set fire to it, rather than see it fall into the hands of the Union men.

Some men would not have taken the chance of running by the burning schooner for fear their own vessel might catch fire, but Cushing, being only a boy,

was not that kind of a man. He pushed on to Jacksonville, captured it, seized two schooners, took the mail out of the post-office, and then set out to find the salt works. The reason why he did not destroy the salt works was a good one ; there were no salt works to be found.

There being nothing more that he could do, Cushing set off down the river again, keeping a sharp lookout for Confederates, with one of the schooners in tow. The other he had burned. He had not gone very far before he saw an encampment on the bank. He stopped and fired into it, until the Confederates all ran away, and then proceeded. A short distance below the enemy opened on him with two guns hidden in a fringe of brush at the top of the high bank. By this time there were plenty of Confederates running up and down the side of the river howling at him.

Cushing returned the fire with his one cannon, a pivot gun amidships, and soon put a stop to the battery. But by that time it was so late that the pilots would not try to get the steamer down the river among the shoals and bars. There was nothing for it but to drop anchor and lay there all night, with no one knew how many Confederates prowling around the banks waiting to attack them. The woods were full of lantern lights.

There didn't seem to be much chance for the *Ellis* if the enemy took it into their heads to come out, but Cushing got ready to give them a warm recep-

tion. Boarding nets were spread, cutlasses and revolvers were brought out, and the crew stood on guard all night. It was an anxious time until morning. But morning came at last, and the Confederates had let them alone.

They started down-stream again, and were beginning to feel pretty safe, when a real disaster overtook them. The pilot got in the wrong channel and ran the *Ellis* fast on a sand-bar. Cushing, seeing a chance of getting her off, had everything movable transferred to the schooner that he had been towing. But still she stuck.

Determined not to lose his ship, the lad sent some sailors back to get the guns the Confederates had used on him from the bluff the afternoon before. He intended to make a land battery of them and stay by until the *Ellis* could be brought off. But the Confederates had come in the night and removed the guns.

Still Cushing would not abandon his ship. He put his crew in the schooner, all but six volunteers, and ordered it to drop down the river for a mile or two. Presently, as he had expected, the enemy began to open on him with half a dozen guns scattered up and down the bank. Cushing fought back until the Confederates found the range and began to drop their shells on deck, setting fire to the *Ellis*. When he saw that he could not hold out, and had made sure that the fires set by the enemy's guns would destroy the *Ellis*, he loaded her swivel gun with a

last charge, and took to the small boat. The seven men rowed through the fire of the Confederate guns to the schooner, and made their way back to the blockading squadron. Cushing felt very badly about it, and asked for a court of enquiry, but his superiors only smiled, and would have patted him on the back if they had dared.

The next big thing he did was foolhardy and reckless. He was cruising off Cape Fear River in the *Monticello*, of which he was commander. At the mouth of the river was the Confederate fort Caswell. Above the fort was a little village called Smithville, occupied at the time as a post by a Confederate force under General Hébert.

Cushing took twenty men in two boats, rowed up past the fort on a dark night, hauled up under a high bank in front of Smithville, and with Master's Mate William L. Howarth, another officer, and a seaman, walked up to the general's headquarters in such a cool and deliberate manner that the thousand Confederate soldiers in the town paid not the least attention, thinking that they had business there.

And they had business there. Their business was to capture one Mr. Hébert, adjutant-general of the Confederate army. The first man they walked into was an engineer officer, who started to yell, but was promptly muzzled. He succeeded in making enough noise before he was muzzled, however, to alarm General Hébert, who took to his heels, half dressed, thinking his troops had mutinied. Finding the gen-

eral gone, Cushing and his companions, with their prisoner, strolled back to their boats, got in, and rowed down the river. It was not until the adjutant-general came back out of the woods whither he had fled that the Confederates knew that an enemy had been among them.

Four months later Cushing made a more dangerous excursion into the same country. This time he had a better excuse. The Confederates had a ram, the *Raleigh*, that had been making things uncomfortable for the blockading squadron. The ram was believed to be in the Cape Fear River, lurking to come out. She had been out once, and done some damage. It was agreed among the officers of the blockading fleet that it would be a good thing for them if the ram were destroyed.

That was just the kind of task that was to young Cushing's liking. He obtained permission to go and blow her up with a torpedo. He started on the business on the night of June 23, 1864, taking with him Jones and Howarth, the two who had been with him before, and fifteen men in a boat. The night was cloudy and dark. The boat got past the fort, and Smithville, without trouble, but as it was slipping up the river the moon came out. The strip of river between the wooded banks became suddenly as light as day, and the Confederate sentries who paced up and down the banks saw the boat full of men.

Cushing turned about quickly, and made down-

stream as fast as he could go. Of course the enemy, not knowing that it was Cushing, believed the boat was fleeing. Cushing kept on until he got under the shadow of the bank, when he turned about once more and went up the river in the shadow, past the relieved sentries. He could hear them shouting at each other across the river, discussing the sudden disappearance of the boat, and he had work enough to keep from laughing out loud. He was much of a boy, as you see.

Dawn found them seven miles from Wilmington. Wilmington was a Confederate stronghold, and the country was filled with Confederates. If the men in the boat should be found, they would probably be hanged as spies. They turned the boat into a swamp, and lay there all day, without saying a word above a whisper. It was not very pleasant or comfortable, but it was much more pleasant and comfortable than being hanged as spies.

Just as they were about to start out, a fishing party came down from Wilmington in two boats. That made it awkward. If the fishing party should spread the alarm the jackies would be lost. There was nothing for it but to catch the party that had come out to catch fish. So the thing was done.

That night Cushing spent in prowling about the river, finding out what he could about the defenses of the town. He was not one to leave anything undone while he was about it. In the morning, being a boy all through, he conceived the notion of rowing

up a little creek to where the road from Wilmington to Fort Fisher crossed, to see what he could find. It was too good a joke to let get by.

Hiding his boat behind a bend in the creek, he hid himself under the bridge where the road crossed, and waited. Presently he heard a horse galloping down from Wilmington. He came out of his hiding, and held up the horseman. The fellow was carrying dispatches to the fort. Cushing turned him over to his men, and waited for the next to come along.

The next came along, but he was too quick for the lad. He turned around and started back to the town, as fast as his horse could run. Cushing leaped on the horse of the man he had taken and put after him, but the other's animal was too fleet and he got away.

Anybody but a boy would have thought it about time to clear out. The one who had escaped might give an alarm in Wilmington, and they might expect an entire army along the road pretty soon. But Cushing, being only a boy, and learning from one of their prisoners that there was a store two miles away, found out that he was hungry. Nothing would do but he must have something to eat from that store. Crackers and cheese, perhaps, or a bag of ginger snaps.

Howarth was hungry also. Howarth was so hungry that he would risk his life for the things in that store. There was a man among the prisoners,

a "cracker," who was about the same size as Howarth. Howarth put on his rough jean clothes, and started out for the store, on the horse Cushing had captured. They had lots of fun over it; Cushing laughed till he had to hold his sides to see Howarth riding off in the rig of the "cracker."

Howarth jaunted along, gossiping with every one he met, cracked jokes with the storekeeper, and came back in good time loaded with good things to eat. The crew ate a merry supper, hidden in the bushes, and amused themselves cutting telegraph wires until it was dark enough to start out again.

This was the third night they had been in the river, and they had not done the thing that they came to do. But Cushing would not go back without doing it. Getting into the boat with his prisoners, he rowed out into the river again, and went to look for the Confederate ram. Presently he found her, and found that he need not have come. She was a total wreck, having been destroyed by the Confederates themselves. It seems that she had been strained so badly on a passage over the bar at the mouth of the river that it was impossible to repair her, and her own people had sunk her rather than risk her being taken by the enemy.

Serious things were in store for the party. Setting the prisoners adrift in their boats without sails or oars, so that they could not get anywhere soon enough to raise an alarm, Cushing started down the stream to return to the fleet outside. The night was

cloudy and dark, excepting for occasional flashes of the moon through breaks in the clouds.

One of these flashes came just as they had reached the mouth of the river, showing up the water like a sheet of silver. Black on the sheet was a Confederate guard-ship, only a few boat-lengths away.

"Boat ahoy! What boat is that?" came a hail from the guard-ship.

Cushing leaned forward. "At 'em, boys!" he said, in a low voice, and his men pulled strong for the enemy. Boy that he was, he was going to take this boat, just to make a day of it.

But as they were coming up swiftly, three more boats crept out of the shadows of the clouds into the patch of light. That was three too many, even for a boy, and Cushing headed about quickly. As he headed, four boats came from the shadows on the other side of the floating patch. Things were getting interesting.

Cushing steered for the space between the boats; there was room, and there was time. But in an instant a large schooner emerged from the darkness, filled with soldiers, and cut him off.

The situation was desperate. They were surrounded by overpowering numbers. The men looked at Cushing, to see what he was going to do about it.

Some boys would have got rattled in those circumstances. Not so Cushing. Heading swiftly to the west, he gave the word, and the men pulled, as though they had not already been pulling through

the hours of the night. The boat shot in the direction of the distant western inlet.

The men with him wondered what he was doing that for; the enemy could easily head him off there.

Perhaps the Confederates wondered too, thinking the man a fool. At any rate, they all started at once to intercept him, going as fast as they could across his course.

The clouds were stirring in the sky; blotches of shadow traced themselves over the water. Presently one of the shadows swallowed Cushing's boat for an instant. In that instant he headed about. The Confederates could not see him.

When the cloud was gone, and they looked for their prey, they beheld him making swift tracks behind them for the crossing of the bar. Before they could take up the chase again, Cushing and his men were in the breakers, and giving three cheers, boy-like, for the disappointed and chagrined Johnnies.

So much for Cushing for the present. Now for the circumstances and events that led up to the biggest thing the boy did; the biggest thing, perhaps, that any boy ever did—or man, either, for that matter.

You must know that early in the war, the United States fleet established and maintained a blockade of the Confederate ports, preventing ships from passing in or out. Of course a good many got past the blockade, and it was very exciting work, but the free flow of commerce was interfered with. This was a serious thing for the Confederate states; one of the

most serious they had to contend with. They had to get their cotton out to obtain money for carrying on the war, and they had to get all sorts of goods in for their own use. They manufactured very little in the South; the growing of cotton was almost their only industry. So when the Northern vessels prevented them from shipping out their cotton in exchange for the things they had to have they were in a serious situation.

If the Confederates had had a navy they could have opened the blockade in spots. But they hadn't any to speak of; nothing that could compete successfully and for any time with the Northern navy. So they set about building ironclads and rams with which they hoped to be able to sink the wooden ships of the enemy.

One of the ironclads was the *Merrimac*. You know her story. Another was the *Raleigh*, which Cushing had already been to destroy. Another was the *Albemarle*; and now we come to our story.

The *Albemarle* was built in a corn field above Plymouth, on the Roanoke River, which empties into Albemarle Sound, in North Carolina. The Union boats were in possession of the Sound, and were in possession of Plymouth at the time the ram was building. The Union officers in the fleet knew all about her, and asked Major-General Foster, in command of the Union army in North Carolina, to go and burn her. But Foster laughed at their fears, telling them the vessel would never be put to use.

The *Albemarle* was a savage fighting-machine for those times. She was low and wide and flat-bottomed, so she could cross the bars where the Union vessels could not. She had a wicked snout which was designed to be rammed into the sides of an enemy, and she carried two hundred pound guns. But worst of all, she was covered with four inches of iron. The guns of those days would not shoot through four inches of iron, and everybody knew it. Perhaps General Foster, even, knew that.

I wish you could know how hard the Confederates worked to build that ram. As I said, she was built in a corn field. Of course, her keel was laid close to the water, but there was nothing like a ship-yard where she was started. And all they had to work with was a blacksmith's forge and what iron they could scrape up in the countryside. They called Captain Cooke, who helped to build her, the "Ironmonger Captain," because he used to send men around in wagons picking up old bolts, bars, horseshoes, axles, nails—anything they could find. I don't doubt they used to call out "Old iron! Old iron!" as they drove through the neighboring villages and farmyards.

At last she was ready for the water, fitted with two engines and twin screws, and started out. Even as she started out to fight the men still worked on her. There were ten portable forges aboard her; and the men were driving the last rivets as she got up steam and worked her way down the narrow river toward Plymouth.

The plan was to attack Plymouth. General Hoke, with a Confederate force, moved by land, and the *Albemarle* by water. The Union boats *Miami* and *Southfield* were at Plymouth, under command of Lieutenant Flusser, in the *Miami*. Lieutenant Flusser knew that he had no chance against the monster with a huge beak whose sides his guns could not penetrate, but he stood his ground.

The *Albemarle* came down, rammed the *Southfield* and sunk it, and would have done the same by the *Miami* if that vessel had not got out of the way. The brave lieutenant was killed. He fired a shot against the iron hide of the monster at close range. The shot flew into bits, and the pieces came back and killed him.

The *Albemarle* was unhurt, but she nearly foundered. She drove her beak so far into the *Southfield* that when that vessel sunk the wreck clung to the nose of the Confederate boat and all but pulled her down too.

Captain Melanchthon Smith, who was in command of the Union squadron, immediately set about gathering a fleet to meet the ram, and there was a pretty fight between them all early in May, 1864. The first fight had been on the 29th of April of that year. In the second fight the gunboat *Sassacus* went head on into the *Albemarle*, with oil and waste burning in her furnaces to give her head of steam, with the hope that the ram might be rammed.

The *Sassacus* got much the worst of it. She did

no damage, and was badly crippled herself. Two of the hundred pound shots from the Confederate boat tore through her vitals, ripping up her engines, tearing loose her steam pipes, and filling her with scalding steam. She would have blown up if it had not been for James W. Hobby, first assistant engineer on board.

Never forget what he did that day. He went down into that scalding steam to the fire room, where the fire was puffing under the boilers, fed by waste and oil, and dragged the coals out with a fire-rake. He stayed there until he had finished the task. Then they brought him out, blinded and helpless.

The fight kept up all day. The iron pellets from the Union ships showered against the sides of the *Albemarle*, and rolled off into the water, doing no damage. At dark she drew off up the Sound to Plymouth, but the Union officers were in despair. They knew that she could come down and annihilate them at her own pleasure, and they could do nothing to prevent it.

Then it was that William Barker Cushing did what he did. A man up in New York had just finished making two steam picket boats of a new type, devised by an engineer in the navy named John L. Lay, and introduced into the navy by Chief Engineer William Willis Wiley Wood. These two picket boats had each a spar hinged on the bow. The spar was about twenty-eight feet long, and was so arranged that it could be lifted, or lowered be-

neath the water. The idea was to fasten a torpedo to the end of the spar, poke it against the side of any vessel you wanted to blow up, pull a string, and there you were. The boats were decked over forward, and carried each a twelve-pound howitzer. The engines were very carefully made so that they would run quietly, and were so arranged in the picket boats that they could be covered with tarpaulins to shut in their light and sound.

At best, they were not very safe things for the men who should endeavor to use them against an enemy's ship, and they required delicate skill in the handling. It was necessary to take the launch within twenty-five or thirty feet of an enemy, and to jab the torpedo against the side of the intended victim at precisely the right moment. The torpedo had to be placed beneath the water line. You can easily see that if the launch was driven too close, the torpedo would overreach, and if the launch was not brought close enough, it would not reach at all. And while the launch was being brought to the right point, it was not reasonable to hope that the enemy would be entirely ignorant or idle.

The man who had to operate the torpedo spar ran an especial risk. He was obliged to stand in the bows, wholly unprotected from sight or shot, and pull the string firing the torpedo at the proper instant of time. And then the troubles of the picket boat were likely to be just beginning. Of course the explosion of a torpedo that would be large

enough to sink a ram or an ironclad, within thirty feet of the little launch, would certainly do more or less to the launch. If the explosion did not swamp it, the waves from the sinking victim would be more than likely to do so. It was a dangerous business. I have never been able to learn whether the men who built the picket boats in New York were anxious to operate them in Albemarle Sound.

But Cushing was anxious to do so. It was just the sort of work that appealed to his boyish imagination. It was the kind of game he liked to play. He sought and obtained command of the proposed expedition to blow up the ram *Albemarle*, then lying at Plymouth. Mind you, he was not twenty-two, and he was chosen for the task because his superiors knew that in all the fleet there was not another man, or boy, so well fitted to carry out the plans.

There had already been one attempt to blow up the Confederate ram. Coal-heaver Baldwin, with four men from the *Wyandusing*, had gone in a boat up the Roanoke River, under cover of the night, carrying with them four torpedoes. The plan was to float the torpedoes down against the *Albemarle*, where they were to be fired by Coal-heaver Baldwin, who was to swim down with them. But on the way down the torpedoes fouled a schooner, Baldwin was discovered, and the five men had difficulty in escaping with their lives from the swamp where they had hidden.

Cushing's plan was to take the two picket boats,

slip up the river at night, and attack the ram where she lay at the Plymouth wharf. The Confederates had taken every possible precaution against such an attack. The river was watched constantly by a double line of sentries along its banks. There was a squad of guards on a schooner near the wreck of the *Southfield*, a mile below the place where the *Albemarle* was tied up. There were a thousand Confederate soldiers camped on and near the wharf. Great fires were kept burning every night to light up the river and prevent a surprise. The crew of the ram was eternally vigilant. The hundred pound guns were kept loaded and trained on the bend of the river below, which any attacking party would have to round. As a last precaution, a boom of heavy cypress logs was stretched in front of the ram, at a distance from her of thirty feet, to fend off floating torpedoes.

Cushing did not know about the boom of logs. In fact, he did not know clearly about any of the precautions, except that there was a guard at the wreck of the *Southfield*. Of course, he guessed that there were plenty of Confederates around to take care of their one naval hope. But he did not care for them; they made the adventure just that much more interesting. He had already done so many daredevil things that any ordinary risk was simply dull work.

On the way down from New York one of the picket boats was swamped in a storm on Chesapeake

Bay. Cushing brought the other through safely, and reported on her to Commander Macomb, of the *Shamrock*, who was the senior officer in those waters. Final preparations were made, and on the night of October 26, 1864, the lad started.

He had with him a picked crew of thirteen officers and men ; among them his old chums, Tom Gay and Billy Howarth. They were towed by the *Otsego* to a point on the Sound near the mouth of the Roanoke. Presently they started under their own steam ; but they had not gone far when the launch ran aground. It was so late before Cushing could get her off that when he finally succeeded in doing so he was obliged to put back to the *Otsego* and wait for another favorable night.

It was now the night of October 29th. Cushing, who had been burning up with impatience for three days, had spent the evening running from the ward-room to the deck to see how the weather was coming on. The evening had set in with promise of clouds, and a possibility of rain. Once or twice the sky had broken clear, but about ten o'clock it began to thicken up more and more. At midnight Cushing bounced down into the ward-room with a whoop. "Come on, boys !" he said, "we can make it now. It's as black as a nigger's pocket."

The crew clambered into the launch. A cutter was filled with armed men and made fast at the stern of the launch. Cushing knew about the guard schooner at the wreck of the *Southfield*. He

thought he might need these men to take care of that vessel.

"Good-bye," said Cushing, shaking hands all round with the officers of the *Otsego*. "It's another stripe or a coffin this time," he laughed. And, although he laughed when he said it, they knew that he meant it.

Lieutenant Cushing was the last aboard the picket boat. He went forward to have a look at the torpedo spar, examined the howitzer, lifted a tarpaulin to peep at the engine, glanced astern to see that the cutter full of armed men was fast to the stern-post, cast an eye over the men in his own boat, and gave the word. "Go ahead," he said to Stever and Stotesbury, the engineers. They gave her the throttle; the engines puffed softly once or twice, the wheel began to churn under the stern, and the picket boat moved out into the dark waters of the Sound. The officers lining the rail of the *Otsego* watched them out of sight, and turned away without a word.

"Well, Billy, how do you feel?" chuckled Lieutenant Cushing, putting a long lean arm around Howarth's shoulders as he took a seat beside him in the stern.

"Fine. Great," returned Howarth.

A scurry of rain lashed across their faces. "Great night for it, Billy," commented Cushing, in a low voice.

"Best kind of a night," assented Billy Howarth.

The engine was purring contentedly under the tarpaulins. There was not a light on the boat, and not a sound but the mutter of the engine, an occasional whisper between the men, and the lisp- ing ripple of the waves against her bows as she pushed her nose up-stream.

Lieutenant Cushing was humming a tune so softly that no one heard him but Howarth, sitting close beside him. "Good thing there's no moon to-night," he whispered, presently, breaking off his tune. "Remember how the moon came near playing the mischief with us that night we went after the *Raleigh*, down on New River?"

"The moon is made for love, and not for war," observed Howarth.

The silence was broken again by a low chuckle from Cushing. "I'd like to have been around when that storekeeper down by Wilmington found out that he'd had a Yankee sailor for a customer that day you rigged up in the cracker's clothes," he whispered.

Howarth joined his quiet laugh. "God must have some plans for us," he said. "He's brought us through some pretty tight places."

"Yes, but we're rather stretching things to-night, old man. We mustn't depend upon Him too much to see us through this."

As they pushed through the water they could hear the occasional tread of a Confederate sentry on the banks of the stream. Here and there ahead of

them the ruddy glow of watch-fires blurred into the night. The wind was rising, sending the rain whipping along the water and stirring the river into a myriad indistinct noises that blurred the sounds the little picket boat made. Cushing leaned forward, lifted the tail of a tarpaulin that covered the engine, very carefully, and whispered to Stotesbury, the engineer. "Cut her down a little, Stotesbury," he said. "We've got to be mighty quiet in through here. The banks are coming pretty close."

The purring of the engine subsided into a dull rumble. The slash of the wheel through the water became no more than a faint plashing, which might have been made by the little whitecaps that were blossoming out on the waves. The waves plumped against the prow of the boat and bubbled away on either side. The men could not be heard to breathe.

"Say!" exclaimed Cushing, under his breath, leaning a hand on Howarth's shoulder. "We won't blow up the *Albemarle*!"

Howarth turned toward him quickly, trying to make out his face through the darkness. That was not at all like Lieutenant Cushing. "What do you mean?" he said, sharply.

"We'll capture her!" answered Cushing.

"Oh," said Howarth, relieved.

Cushing chuckled again. "Gee whiz, Billy! What would the boys of the fleet say if they saw us coming down the river in her, with the stars and

stripes at the gaff? I'll bet you they'd cut and run for it. What do you think?"

Billy grinned until his white teeth shone through the night. "They wouldn't believe it, Cushing."

"It just struck me as a good idea," Cushing went on, becoming more serious. "It seems a shame to blow her up. She's too good for that. We could use her very well. I think we'll run off with her."

"How will you do it?" asked Howarth. He did not speak from doubt, but from a desire to learn his lieutenant's plans.

"We'll land a little below her and board her from the wharf. We'll do it so quickly that they won't know what has happened until we are headed down-stream with her. Billy, you can do anything if you do it quickly. The more absurd the adventure is, the easier it is to do it. It's the last thing they will be expecting."

"The Johnnies are pretty strong around her," suggested Howarth, not by way of discouragement, but to remind Cushing of all the things that should be considered beforehand.

"The more the better," answered Cushing. "That makes it easier. If there were only forty of them, they would be ready for anything, but if there are a thousand, as there probably are, they will feel secure in their numbers. Remember the time we ran off with the engineer at Smithville? We would have got General Hébert just as easy if he hadn't given us his heels. That shows you what

you can do if you do the unexpected." Cushing could not help chuckling at the reminiscence.

"If you want to try it you can count on all the boys," was the only comment Howarth made further.

"Hist!" warned Cushing. "Hush."

The guard schooner, anchored near the wreck of the *Southfield*, suddenly loomed up through the darkness. Cushing shoved the helm hard over, and swung the boat closer inshore; so close to the shore that the men in her could hear a couple of Confederate soldiers swearing at the wind and rain.

"They'll have more than that to scold about, before we come back," said Cushing, leaning over to whisper into the ear of Howarth. Howarth nodded his head by way of reply.

It was a critical moment. Much depended on their getting by the schooner. It was only a mile to the wharf where the *Albemarle* was tied. If any of the men on the schooner should hear them, or see them, and fire a shot, it would bring the entire Confederate force in Columbus down about the ears of the fifteen men in the torpedo launch.

Cushing lifted his head high to listen; his breath was as even as that of a babe, and his pulse beat as steadily as a sleeping man's.

There was a faint clank of an arm in the cutter, towing behind. The armed men there were restless with anxiety, expecting their work to come at any instant. It was understood that at the least sign of discovery from the schooner the cutter would be

cast off, and the men in her must smother any attempt of the guard to set off signal rockets.

Cushing, hearing the sound behind him, swore softly under his breath, and listened more intently. From the direction of the schooner, now abreast, could be heard the heels of a sentinel pacing her decks, and the gurgling splash of waves against her sides. Slowly the picket boat drew ahead. The danger was past.

The engine, turning evenly, without a sigh or sound, drove them farther and farther toward the supreme moment. The river was narrowing down; it was not one hundred and fifty yards wide now. Cushing kept the middle of the stream. "Darn their old fires, anyway," he whispered, presently. The dull glow of the watch-fires, kept continually on both banks of the river near the ram, shone in the sky, and a ruddy gleam from them stole now and then across the running water.

It was a lucky thing that on that night, of all nights, the fires had been allowed to burn very low. They were scarcely more than heaps of embers. Cushing observed that as they rounded the last bend between them and the *Albemarle*, and came into view of the fires. "I take it all back," he said, gaily, in a whisper. "They have behaved very well with their fires to-night."

Cushing picked out paths on the face of the stream that were least illuminated by the fires and crept inshore. "We're going to take her, boys," he

passed the word. “We’re going to take her back with us.”

The boys were all glad of that. They did not say so, but there was a feeling in the wet air that they were glad.

Cushing whispered to Stotesbury again, and the engineer closed down the engine another notch ; it made no more sound now than a sleeping kitten.

Out of the darkness loomed the *Albemarle*, lying against her wharf. There was not a sound aboard her ; not a light. Dim, weird in the gloom, she looked like some huge monster slumbering ; hunch-shouldered, black, ugly, and deadly.

Cushing headed for the shore, a few yards below the monster. “By cracky, Billy, we’re going to get away with it !” he whispered, gleefully.

Suddenly the silence of the night was shattered by the loud barking of a dog not far from the shore. The beast howled and yelped ; each yelp cut through the night like a whip. Cushing, standing now in the stern of the boat, clenched his two fists and shook with anger. He waited, praying that each howl would be the last ; shrinking from them, as they kept on, as though they were blows in his face. A tingle of excitement could be felt running through the men in the boat. Cushing swore.

Another sound entered the stillness of the night. There was the hurried tread of a sentry on board the *Albemarle*, the thump of a musket butt against the rail. “Boat ahoy ! What boat is that ?” came a hail.

No answer. A moment of supreme suspense ; not a breath was drawn on the two boats. Another challenge. A shot ; the pink flash of it leaped and died.

In the instant the midnight hush burst into a mad medley of noises. A dozen dogs took up the cry of their fellow ; muskets popped up and down the river banks ; bells jangled, and the alarm rattle raised its horrid noise above the sudden din. The watch-fires were already beginning to spring up, heaped with fresh fuel.

No chance now for the surprise.

"Ahead, fast !" shouted Cushing to Stotesbury and Stever. At the same instant he cut the tow-line, setting the cutter adrift.

The good engine hummed ; the boat churned through the water, headed directly for the *Albemarle*.

As they came closer, Cushing saw, by the glare of the watch-fires, the long black thread of the log boom circling his prey. He was almost upon them.

You will find that men who do great things think quickly. Perhaps they do not have to think at all ; perhaps they know what to do without thinking. Cushing figured out in one mental flash that the logs must have been in the water for some time, and that they were surely slimy. He comprehended that if he went into them head on, with enough speed, at least the bow of his boat would slide over them and give him a chance with his torpedo boom ; for now there was no hope of capturing the ram.

With a thrust of the wheel he swung out into the stream, made a wide circle, and came charging on again, full tilt.

As he headed for the ram the second time, Cushing ran to the bow, and stood by the torpedo spar. There was a rattle of musketry on board the ram. Bullets wheezed about the ears of the men in the boat; Cushing's coat was filled with buckshot; a ball knocked off the sole of his shoe. "Let 'em have it, Mr. Gay," he said, and the howitzer spat canister into the wreath of sputtering gun-fire that fringed the decks of the *Albemarle*.

Something snapped aboard the ram. Cushing understood; the great hundred pound rifled cannon had missed fire. "Thank you just the same," said Cushing, with a comical bow in the direction of the snap.

"Leave the ram!" he shouted aloud. "Get ashore! We're going to blow you up!" There was the same mockery in the shouted warning as you may hear any Saturday afternoon in fall on a football field; Cushing was at bottom a boy, as I have said several times.

There was a dull, heavy blow against the bow of the little boat; she lurched into the air forward. For a moment she hung there, and then slid ahead into the water inside the barrier, the logs sinking beneath her weight.

It is not an easy thing to do, to swing a long boom on its hinge, thrust the free end of it under water,

feel around for the bottom of a boat, and get the exact spot that you want to reach. It is not easy in any circumstances. It is much less easy in a dark night, when you can scarcely see the vessel in front of you; when your own boat is bobbing about; when men are potting at you with muskets, and when you are conscious of a hundred-pound cannon in process of being fired at you not a dozen yards from your head. You must be quick, or you will get so close that you can only slap the other boat with the side of your boom; and you must be quick, or the hundred-pound gun will blow you and all your friends into jelly.

Cushing was quick, because he was in no hurry. He lowered the spar on its hinge, thrust it under the overhang of the ram's stern, raised it until he felt the thump of the torpedo against the ship's bottom, and then he pulled the string that fired it off.

It was as though the river was turning upside down. There was a blubbering roar beneath the water, and a lump of it hove over the decked bow of the little craft. At the same instant there was an unmuffled roar from the sides of the monster as the hundred pounder went off.

But the gun was too late. In the instant before it shot, the *Albemarle* rose with a shuddering heave, flopped once or twice like a dying whale, and began to settle in the water. The lifting of the ship by the torpedo destroyed the aim of the great gun, and the hundred pounds of canister whistled off into the river.

The Confederates aboard were calling on the men in the boat to surrender. There was no chance to get her out; she was swamped with water; her fires were drowned, and she was hemmed in by the boom.

“Save yourselves, lads!” shouted Cushing.

He took off his sword and pistol, and threw them into the water. He removed his coat and shoes. With a last look at the work he had done, he leaped over side, and struck out down the river. One or two followed him.

The banks both sides were lined with yelling Confederates. The watch-fires, burning brilliantly now, threw a light on the whole river. There was no chance to land. He kept on down-stream. Musket-balls whisked into the water about him. He would swim as long as he could, and then take his chances on going ashore. He glanced over his shoulder once more at the wreck of the *Albemarle*, now settled to the bottom, and chuckled at the sight.

He had swum half a mile. He was beginning to grow tired. His wrist hurt him. He had been shot there at some time during the recent event. He had not known it at the time. He would not try to get any farther down, for fear he would not have strength enough to make the land. There was no sign of Confederates opposite where he was swimming. He turned inshore.

He had not gone many labored strokes when he saw some one struggling in the water close to him. “That you, Billy?” he asked.

"It's me," came a gasping answer. "God help me, I'm done for."

Cushing recognized the voice as that of Woodman, his fireman. "Brace up," he said, reaching out a hand and grasping the man by the sleeve just as he was sinking.

Woodman's head was under. He struggled it free of the water. "I can't. Great God! I'm done for."

He said no more. For a space Cushing tried to drag him through the water toward the dark loom of the shore, but he could not. He was too tired; they would both drown. He loosed his hold, and the man sank.

The tide, running down the river, swept him with it. He fought with all his remaining strength; the shore drew no closer, it seemed. "Come, now, Cushing," he heard himself saying. "You'll never get that stripe unless you get ashore."

A dozen times he felt himself sinking; felt himself giving up; felt himself desiring to go beneath the water, and have an end of it, but he still struck toward the shore. At last, when each sweep of his arms and each feeble kick of his legs cost him pain in body and brain, he felt ground under him, and tumbled out on the bank, where he lay, wet, cold, exhausted.

Lying there, he became conscious gradually of a regular foot tread going and coming not far off. He stirred his senses to listen, and made out the pacing

of a sentry. He had come ashore on the Plymouth side of the river under the brows of a Confederate fort.

He knew that if he lay there until morning he would be discovered. Weak as he was, and faint from the pain and loss of blood occasioned by the wound in his wrist, he made up his mind that he would get out of the vicinity of the fort without delay.

Not far off he saw the edge of a bushy swamp, an excellent place in which to hide. But the way there lay close to the sentry's beat. He waited until the fellow was going away from him, sprang to his feet, and made a dash for the swamp. Before he had covered half the distance the sentry reached the end of his beat, and turned. Cushing dropped into the grass and waited.

As he lay in the grass waiting, he heard more footsteps coming toward him. He hid his face and white sleeves under his body and lay without breathing. Four men passed so close that he could have reached out and touched the one nearest him. They were discussing the wreck of the *Albemarle*. "She's a goner. It's hopeless," he heard one of them say. They were too excited to observe the man who had furnished them with a subject for conversation.

When they had passed, Cushing wriggled through the grass, not caring to venture another dash, and at last reached the swamp, where he rested until

daybreak. As it grew lighter he made his way through the swamp, heading down-stream. It was a long way out of the Confederate country; he proceeded very cautiously, stopping now and then to listen whether any one was moving near him. The bushes made a thick screen. He avoided all paths, seeking out the most obscure and densest parts of the swamp for his course.

Presently he came to a corn field. The corn field gave quite as good protection from sight as the swamp, and the walking was better. Moreover, it was more nearly in the route which he knew he must follow to get back to the river opposite the Union vessels. He quarreled with the luck that brought him ashore on this side of the river, instead of the other, as he made up his mind to cross the corn field.

He crossed, and was just emerging carefully from the other side when he beheld the legs and lower body of a man between the stalks of standing corn, not ten feet from him. It was clear that the man saw him, and was watching him.

Cushing was without arms, and was fairly exhausted, but he decided that he would not be taken without a fight, and made himself ready for an encounter. The next moment the corn leaves were pushed aside and a black face surmounted by a mat of white wool peered through at him. "Lord a massy, you-all suah done frighten dis poor niggah!" said a voice. "Foh de lan's sake, where

you been?" the darky continued, frightened again as he had another look at the hatless, shoeless, draggled specimen of humanity standing staring at him. Cushing was muddy from crown to sole; his clothing was torn, and there was blood on his shirt.

He laughed as he saw the old fellow's growing terror. "I'm no ghost, Sambo," he said. "I'm Lieutenant Cushing, United States Navy, and I've just been up in Columbus attending to a little matter of business with the ram *Albemarle*."

"Fore de Lord, Massah Cushion, Ah suah done t'ought Ah was a gonner dat time," chuckled the old negro, reassured by the sound of a human voice and a laugh coming from the spectre that had risen before him out of the corn field. "You-all's sure been t'rough somefin outdacious, I reckon." His mouth hung open with curiosity.

Cushing gratified his desire for information until he had taken the edge off his appetite, and the old fellow was willing to go over to Columbus and find out more definitely what had happened to the *Albemarle*. "You-all jest lie low here till I come back, Mistah Cushion," he said. "Ah'll find out for suah, 'deed Ah will."

"And say, Sambo," Cushing called after him, "if you run across anything to eat, you might bring it along with you."

"'Deed Ah will, Mistah Cushion, 'deed Ah will," said the darky, wagging his head by way of added emphasis as he shambled off through the corn.

In due time he came back, his face adorned with a glittering grin. "What news?" asked Cushing.

"Mighty good news, massa," chuckled the old fellow. "De big iron ship's gone to de bottom, suah, and de folks says she's never gwine ter git up ag'in, nohow."

"Good! She's done for, then? Now, old man, tell me how I can get back to the ships."

"Don' you-all want nuffin to eat?" suggested the old negro, making mysterious advances with his hands into the bosom of his shirt.

Cushing, reminded, said that he was ready to eat anything, whereupon the negro produced a corn cake and a piece of a cold boiled sweet potato. Cushing ate them both greedily while the old fellow rattled on about this and that.

"Now, tell me how I can get back to the ships," said Cushing, for the second time, when he had finished the food his friend had brought him.

"Well, massa," began the negro, full of importance, "you jes' creep back through dis yere corn field tell you come to de swamp, and den you turn sharp to youah right, and keep straight ahead, and den de good Lord knows where you-all 'll come to, 'cause I cain't rightly tell. But it'll be somewhere near where you want to go."

Cushing laughed as he thanked him for the information, and set out once more. The swamp was a tangle of underbrush and creeping vines. He could not see ten feet ahead of him. His only guide

was the sun. But one thing was reasonably certain. No one would be likely to find him.

At two o'clock he broke out upon the edge of a creek. He lay down behind the bushes on the bank to rest before he swam it. As he was lying there he heard several voices down-stream. They were drawing closer. He crept farther back in the bushes, and watched.

Presently seven Confederate soldiers came loafing up the stream in a skiff. They, too, were discussing the destruction of the *Albemarle*. "We picked most of 'em up out of the water," he heard one of them telling the others, "but the one that led 'em got away."

"Drowned, I reckon," suggested another.

"The consarned Yank!" exclaimed a third, indignantly. "Ef I could lay my hands on him I'd make him dance a plenty for it, consarn me ef I wouldn't!" Cushing could barely refrain from calling out some taunt to the fellow, but he forced himself to be content with a quiet chuckle.

He waited for them to pass, but they did not pass. They stopped rowing, and looked this way and that. "Might as well land here," said one. "It's as good a place as any." His eyes were fixed on the bank ten feet from where Cushing lay in hiding.

"Naw," protested another. "T'other side's better. I know a spot up yonder where we can stretch out and take it easy for a spell."

The ensuing wrangle was exceedingly interesting to Lieutenant Cushing. In the end the opposite bank

prevailed. They paddled over to it, climbed out, made their boat fast, picked up their grub, and went up a little path that led over the bank.

When they were out of sight Cushing crept down to the creek, waded in, swam across, untied the boat, climbed in, pushed off, and rowed down-stream, laughing to himself over the mental picture he drew of the seven men when they should return to resume their journey in the skiff.

It was then two o'clock in the afternoon. At eleven o'clock that night the lookout on the *Valley City*, one of the Union boats in the fleet, saw a skiff slowly drawing close over the waters of the Roanoke. "Ship ahoy!" came a shout from the skiff, as he watched it, with his musket cocked. They never felt safe from tricks those days.

"Who goes there?" demanded the lookout.

"A friend. Take me up."

A friend! What would a friend be doing out there at that time of night? The lookout called a superior. There was brief consultation. Presently boats were lowered and manned; the men carried arms. Meanwhile the *Valley City* was getting under way. She was not to be trapped so easily.

The boats approached the skiff, ready for anything. "Who are you?" they hailed, as they drew closer.

The answer came back: "Lieutenant Cushing, or what is left of me."

"Cushing!" The voice that had hailed was excited. "And the *Albemarle*?"

"Will never trouble you again," was the rejoinder. "She lies in a muddy grave at the bottom of the Roanoke."

The men in the boats bent to their oars with a will. When they came near the skiff they could see no one in her. As they drew up alongside and looked into her, they saw him, senseless from fatigue, lying on the bottom.

He had got another stripe.

CHAPTER X

THE CRUISE OF THE CAPTAIN'S GIG

WILLIAM HALFORD, coxswain of the captain's gig on the little side-wheel gunboat *Sagittæ*, knocked the ashes out of his pipe against the capstan on the forecastle head and turned to the mess boy who was standing beside him. "So you've not heard of Ocean Island, lad?" he said. "There are a lot of poor fellows who would be glad if they could say as much."

"Why, what is it?" asked the boy, expecting some of the sea lore with which this man delighted to fill his ears.

"Ocean Island, my lad, is a bit of a trap set by the evil one for such as us who follow the sea," Halford went on, casting an eye weather-ward and up and down the decks of the little ship, from force of habit. "'Tis but a pile of sand gathered on a hunch of rocks away out here at the edge of the string of islands that is scattered through these waters; a foot-hill, ye might say, of a range of mountains under the sea. One end of the range, near two thousand mile to the eastward, is the Sandwich Islands, and Midway, where we have been making soundings and deepening the harbor entrance, is another peak in

the long ridge that is high enough to stick its head up through the water."

"How big is it?"

"Ocean Island? No bigger than your thumb, so to speak. A strip of sand, I tell ye, lad, with no water on it, and nothing green, and only now and then a stray bird; a duck, perhaps, or a goony, or booby; and a few seal, odd times. All around it are reefs that chew the swells into suds, all manner of weather. Oh, it's a sweet place for any ship to stumble over in the night, and there's many a poor lad whose bones have whitened on that sand and been buried beneath the drifts of it. I wish you better luck than ever to be cast ashore there, John Polley."

"What are we going there for?" asked the boy, with the curiosity of youth.

"On the chance that there may be some shipwrecked men there now," returned Halford. "Ocean Island is out of the track of all trade, and a crew would starve to death there many times over before any vessel might happen that way. The old man knows it well, and is taking a run over there before he goes back home, on the chance that there is some one there now needing help. It's only a matter of a hundred miles or so from Midway. We should be there by daylight in the morning, if nothing happens." Your old sailor will always say: "If nothing happens," knowing how many things may happen between the evening of one day and the morning of the next.

The *Saginaw* was a side-wheel steamer of 300 tons burden in the United States Navy, mounting two guns, under command of Commander Montgomery Sicard, to whom Halford, after the fashion of sailors, had referred as "the old man." All through the summer of 1870 the *Saginaw* had been engaged in taking soundings of the harbor entrance at Midway Island, and deepening it. Now, late in October, the season was coming to a close and the appropriation of money for carrying on the work was running low, so the *Saginaw* was starting home. But on the way, as Halford had told Polley, she was cruising over to Ocean Island to see if any shipwrecked sailors were there; for Ocean Island was all that Halford had said of it.

The *Saginaw*, like all steamers of her time, was rigged to carry enough sail to drive her when the wind was right, and she was slipping along now under full canvas, with the fires banked under her boilers and her steam under no head at all. The long blue swells of the mid-Pacific, swinging softly under her keel, were brilliant with the afternoon sun of the tropics—Midway being not many degrees above the Tropic of Cancer—but there was a suggestion in the air of the colder blasts that would sweep those seas in a month or two.

Just as Halford was on the point of launching forth in a proper tale of shipwreck and death on Ocean Island, eight bells went on the bridge and was taken up by the bell on the forecastle head. It

was the beginning of Halford's watch on deck, and he swung down the companionway that descended to the main deck, leaving Polley to follow on his way to the galley, disappointed in missing the story that he saw coming.

When the crew turned in for the night, the breeze was still fresh and fair, and the *Saginarw* was bowling along nicely, making fine weather of it. The long Pacific swells were running regularly under her keel. The wind, which had been fresh and steady all day, had kicked up a bit of a sea, but, from the sailors' point of view, it was smooth. You will never get a sailor to say that the sea is rough until he gets ashore and tells about it.

The crew was in high spirits, full of jokes and pranks, as crews always are when homeward bound. Danger was as far from their thoughts as though they already were safe in their beds at home, for all that they were rushing down through an unlighted sea upon Ocean Island. For was not the *Saginarw* a staunch little craft, although she was small, and was not Commander Sicard, the "old man," a good old salt who knew the sea and all its tricks?

William Halford was on the lookout from ten at night until midnight. The *Saginarw* was still sailing steadily on her course, headed due west, and making an easy six knots, when he went below. Before he turned in, Halford took a look at the log, out of curiosity, and made a rough computation. "You'll see your little island by daylight," he told John

Polley, whom he found awake in his hammock, too excited with the thoughts of going home and the evil report of Ocean Island, to sleep easily. "And you can thank your stars that you will have a good ship's bottom under you when you set eyes on it," added Halford, as he sought out his hammock and turned in.

Halford was awakened some time in the night by the sound of the boatswain's whistle piping all hands on deck. He sat up abruptly. It was still dark, as he could see by the ship's lantern that blurred holes in the blackness of the berth-deck. Overhead was the scurrying of feet and the sound of voices lifted in quick command. The noises of the sea beating against the timbers of the vessel were not the noises of the pulsing and softly slipping swells of the high seas running evenly under her keel. There was the lashing hiss of crested waves and blows against the ship's sides that sent shivers through her.

For a brief moment Halford thought that a sudden squall had struck them, but in the next his knowledge of the sea told him it was no squall. The waves whipped against the sides in too rapid succession; the craft jerked and lurched too sharply. A misgiving seized him. He leaped out of his hammock and hurried on deck, shaking John Polley awake as he passed him.

In a glance Halford saw that a change had come over the sea. High crested waves swung past with a mighty rush, following one another closely. Their

flanks were sharp and steep. The little *Saginaw* was twisting and pitching among them; combers climbed her as every sea swept past. The breeze was not stronger than it had been. One thing only could cause those waves. "Breakers!" exclaimed Halford, to himself.

Men were aloft, taking in sail. Officers hurried up and down the deck, shouting orders. Commander Sicard was on the bridge, calm and alert. Down in the boiler room was the clanging sound of the firemen stirring their banked fires in an effort to get up steam. There was no excitement aboard; only orderly haste.

Halford leaped into the rigging and scrambled up to give a hand to the furling of the sail. From aloft, as he climbed, he looked out over the raging breakers. At a little distance ahead the waves broke utterly in a crash of foam, and ran down smoothly beyond into calm water. Lying long and sinister in the midst of the calm water was an island; so much Halford could see by the light of the stars. That it was Ocean Island he had no doubt. Currents were many and treacherous in those waters; one of them must have swept the *Saginaw* along her course faster than the log showed.

"Where are we?" came from beside him as he leaned across the yard, his feet far behind him on the foot-rope, his nails clawing the stiff, hard sail-ful of wind. It was John Polley; the lad had followed him aloft.

"Ocean Island," grunted Halford between teeth set in his struggle with the obstinate sail. "Go below!" It was no place for a mess boy.

"It isn't morning yet," observed the lad, puzzled.

The distance between the little vessel and the last mad crashing of the breakers was lessening with sickening swiftness. Down below could be heard the rattle and clatter of the firemen, raking their fires, trying to get steam on her in time.

"Get below!" snapped Halford to Polley. "You're in the way here." The *Saginaw* was lurching horribly; John could do nothing but cling for his life to the jack-stay.

But the boy in him persisted in wanting to know all about it. "Are we going to be wrecked?" he asked, excitedly, his mind full of visions of what that meant on Ocean Island.

Halford was on the brink of a savage answer, but he relented. "Get below, I tell you!" was all he said.

Smoke was beginning to wind in larger volume out of the funnel. The sails were flapping on all the yards, spilling the wind, which no longer urged her on toward the reef. In a little time there would be enough steam to back her out of danger. In a little time; but she was drifting fast toward the final breaking of the waves where the reef lay.

John could not move. Men were between him and the mast; his short legs could scarcely reach the foot-rope, which jerked and swayed perilously

as the sailors fought the sails into submission. The little steamer continued to drive before the waves. The men aloft and aloft had done all they could ; now all depended on the grim and grimy firemen fighting to quicken their fires down in the dark hold. Smoke was beginning to pour more and more out of the funnel. It was a race with destruction.

Just as hope was beginning to brighten, one huge breaker, creeping up astern, lifted the little ship in its curling fingers, raised her high in the air, twisted her around, swept her on with a shout of water, and flung her down on the rocky bottom as a terrier flings down a rat that it has shaken. The descent was sickening ; the jolt when she struck tore John Polley from his hold on the jack-stay, and he would have fallen if Halford had not grabbed and held him.

There was a crunching sound from the entrails of the ship ; she groaned horribly, like a thing alive that has received its death-blow, and knows it. One sharp shout arose from a dozen throats, and stopped. The noise of the hissing waves, the crashing of the broken craft, the cries of the officers on deck giving quick commands, made the following hush seem more empty than complete silence.

The *Saginaw* ceased lurching and twisting with an awful suddenness. She lay steadily, a thing dead. The combing breakers swept over her decks ; she no longer rose to them ; excepting that parts of her heaved now and then with a slow, low groan.

The sailors clambered out of the rigging. The

vessel was already breaking up when they reached the deck. Her bottom had been completely crushed in by the impact against the reef. Parts of her weather bulwarks were going ; the weather boats had all been smashed or carried away.

Hard, bitter work was ahead of them all. Their only hope was the island ; the little desert island of drifted sand, where no green thing grew, where there was no water, and where no ship came through long months and months. Every succeeding wave tore off pieces of the vessel ; the water about them was filled with wreckage. Huge hunks of her fell away, and lay apart on the reef. She was breaking up rapidly.

But her very going to pieces helped them in what they had to do. The parts that lay about on the reef, or floated close by in the water, shielded the stricken vessel from the force of the waves. They could not get at her directly, as they had done. They still broke across her decks, but not so fiercely.

The men turned their energies toward getting out what boats were left. There was the captain's gig, an old cutter, and a dinghy, battered and strained, but still safe enough. The rest of the boats that had not been swept away were so torn asunder that they could not have lived two minutes in the surf.

By great labor, full of danger, they at last succeeded in getting the gig into the water, and filling it with men. Those left aboard saw her pass safely

through the surf across the reef, emerge on the smooth water beyond and pull for the island. At last the two other small craft were got overboard, manned, and pulled across the reef and to the island. The vessel had struck at three o'clock in the morning ; it was daylight before the crew were all ashore. The captain was the last to leave.

The crew on the island was safe from the waves. That great danger was past. But looming far ahead of them, and not very far off, was another, no less threatening, no less certain, for all that it was a slow and subtle danger. They were ninety-six men, all told, and they were on a desert island, with no food, no chance to get any, no water, and no prospect of a vessel coming that way to take them off.

Commander Sicard sent a boat, early in the morning, to see what might be saved from the wreck. When the boat was half-way across the lagoon between the island and the reef, those in her set up a shouting. They could see, through the clear, still water, boxes and barrels of provisions that had been washed over the reef.

Other boats were sent, with some hooks and ropes that were procured from the wreck. The men pulled up much of the stuff on the bottom. It was soaked with brine, but it could be eaten. It was only enough to last them two months, on quarter rations. At the end of two months, what ? And they had no water.

Commander Sicard soon supplied that want. He

had his men drag an old boiler out of the wreck, and set it up. They filled it with salt water, started a fire under it, evaporated the brine, caught the steam in pipes, and condensed it into water again. It was fresh, of course, and they drank it. That gave them the whole sea to drink. There was enough of the wreckage already ashore to keep them in fuel for a longer time than they would need it.

Members of the crew were detailed to kill what birds they could find, and seals. Of these the cook made soup. The bottom of the lagoon was stripped of shell-fish. Some other fish were caught, but they were few, and not very good food. Some of the fish in tropical waters cannot be eaten at all.

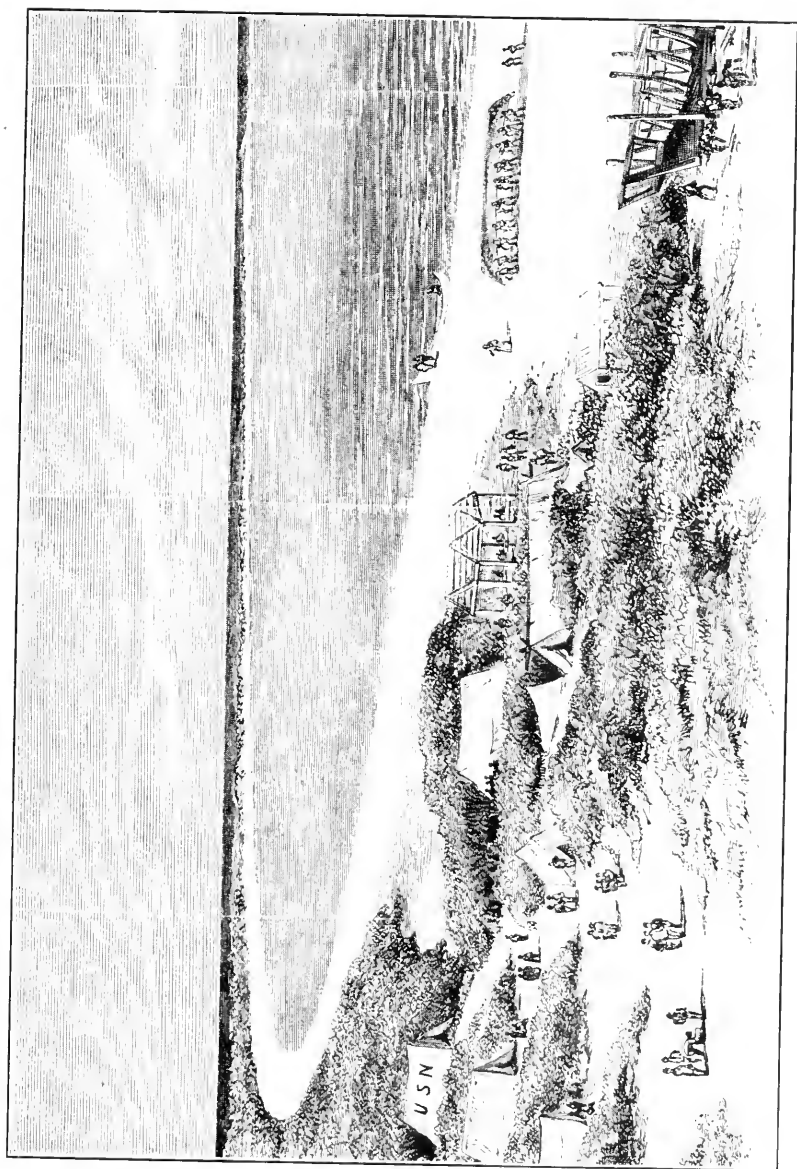
All this helped, of course; but there were ninety-six men to be fed. Ninety-six men, with little chance of a rescue. That fact filled the mind of every man, as he lay on the barren sand of the little island.

Midway Island was only a hundred miles away, but there was nothing there. The nearest port where they could go for assistance was Honolulu, fifteen hundred miles to the eastward. It was their only chance. Some one must go to Honolulu.

"I will take the gig and go," said Lieutenant John G. Talbot, sailing-master of the *Saginaw*.

"I will go with you, if you please, sir," said William Halford, coxswain of the captain's gig.

"So will I, sir," said John Polley. Commander



THE SHIPWRECKED SAILORS ON OCEAN ISLAND

Sicard shook his head at that ; John was only a boy. Halford comforted him with a smile and an arm about his shoulders.

Others came forward, offering to go. Three of them were selected, making five in all to man the gig. Five was a large number to provision for the trip, but five could man the oars, if the wind failed, and save in time what they might consume in food. Also, five would be needed in case of bad weather.

The gig was badly battered. It had settled in the water on the beach when they had finished their work on the wreck with it. It was dragged up on the sand, patched with pieces of wreckage, calked, and strengthened with new thwarts. A mast was stepped in it, and a suit of sails bent on. Another suit was stowed aboard, in case the first should be carried away.

They put aboard her what provisions could be spared from the general store. There was enough to last the five men twenty-five days, on quarter rations. Three-fourths of it was a mixture of peas, beans, wheat, and rice, that had been fished off the bottom, dried in the sun, cooked, and put up in tins. It was wretched food, but it had the advantage of being nourishing and taking up little space. The balance of their provisions was dessicated potatoes. They had plenty of water put aboard in casks.

In this crazy patch-work craft, provisioned as she was, the five men set out on November 18th. Those left behind gave them three cheers as they rowed

across the lagoon and picked their way through the reef, and they gave back the cheers, with a will. There is much in a cheer.

Once past the reef, they made sail. The northerly trade filled the canvas, the little gig heeled over, picked up her footing, and went bubbling and gurgling through the gray waves on her long journey, dancing in the joy of motion as merrily as a yacht on a cruise.

As the island dropped behind the rim of ocean astern and there was nothing in view but heaving water, the men in the gig felt how pitifully small they were, and how large was the Pacific. Ahead of them lay fifteen hundred miles of open sea, and winter was coming on. Not that winter would be very cold in those latitudes. But it was the season of gales. The little craft could not withstand the buffetings of many storms. She had no deck; her gunwale at its highest point was only a few feet above the water. She had been strained and weakened by her experiences in the wreck; her frail ribs and thin bottom seemed little enough to stand between them and a watery grave if the sea should become too angry.

And storms would cause delay, if nothing worse. Time was precious. The crew of the *Saginaw* could last six weeks more on the little island, at the utmost. They had already been on the island three weeks when the gig left; in the beginning they had had little more than two months' short rations. At the

end of six weeks they must surely starve, unless the gig could make Honolulu in time to send them help.

The weather came on nasty from the first. The sky was like tin, a surly wind snarled down from the north and northwest, sending hard waves against the tiny craft and drenching the men with spray. From the first hour they were soaked through. They did not mind that. They thought only of their errand, and the lives that depended on their success. The sea had challenged them and they had taken up the challenge, with the joy that strong men have in a contest. Their fighting spirit was aroused; they were full of zealous enthusiasm. They smoked their pipes and spun yarns of the sea.

On the first day out their courage was tried. When the time came for supper, one of the men, under the order of Lieutenant Talbot, opened a can of the stuff—the peas, beans, rice and wheat that had been fished up out of the water and cooked. As he inserted his knife through the cover there was a little wheezing pop from the contents of the can. The man widened his eyes and held the slit tin to his nose. A look of excitement came into his face. The others watched him silently as he tore his knife through the lid and bent it back. He sniffed again at the contents, and cast a glance of concern at his companions. “Spoiled!” he said, briefly, with a sailor’s oath.

That was bad business. Three-fourths of all their

provisions consisted of this mixture in the cans. Lieutenant Talbot took the tin, smelled of it, tasted it, made a wry face, and laid it on the bottom of the gig. "Let's have another," he said, reaching out.

The sailor handed it to him. He opened and examined it as he had the first, the men watching him closely as he did so. He shook his head and reached out for another can, without a word. The third was like the other two; rotten.

"We'll try it; we must eat it if we can," he said, and took a mouthful.

He passed the can about. They all ate, a little. The stuff was abominable. But they said nothing as they consumed the ration; it was part of the fight.

At midnight one of the men got up from the bottom, where he slept, and staggered aft. Halford was at the tiller. "I'm sick," said the man.

"It's that stuff in the cans," Halford observed, and nothing more was said. The man presently lay down again, suffering, but silent. In the morning he was gray and weak, but he kept silence still.

They began on another can for breakfast. The man who had been sick during the night tried to eat his ration, but could swallow no more than a mouthful or two. Lieutenant Talbot observed his difficulty. "We've got to eat it," he said. "We've nothing else but the dessicated potatoes."

Before night all the crew were sick, excepting Halford. Still they ate the stuff. In three days they were so ill they could scarcely stand; even

Halford was feeling the effects of the poison in the food. Their sickness was increasing.

"It's no use," said Lieutenant Talbot. "It will kill us." He ordered the remaining cans to be thrown overboard.

They were only at the beginning of their voyage; three-fourths of their stores were gone, but no one suggested that they return to the island. If they went back for more food, they would lose a precious week; and there was no food to spare where they came from.

On the evening of the third day Lieutenant Talbot opened the dessicated potatoes and gave each man a spoonful. "Mix it with water," he said.

They made a cold mush of it, and ate in silence.

That night Halford was at the tiller. He was not so weak and sick as the others, being stronger to resist. The rest of the crew were asleep in the bottom.

As they slept Lieutenant Talbot went to Halford. "Halford," he said, "I can count on you?"

"For what, sir?" returned the coxswain, puzzled.

"The men may want to turn back," went on the lieutenant.

Halford shook his head emphatically. "If any man says: 'Go back,' I'll chuck him over, and glad to do it, sir."

The lieutenant expressed his appreciation of the other's staunchness by a moment of silence. "It's pretty serious," he said, presently. "I could not

blame them if they did want to return. Our potatoes will last us only twenty-five days, if I give them two spoonfuls a day. We have nothing else. They are already sick and weak." Lieutenant Talbot was as sick and weak as any, but he said nothing about himself. "It will be a pretty close call, either way. We may run out of rations, and we may all starve to death on them, if they do last. But we can't go back, Halford. We've got to get to Honolulu. It's our only chance. It's their only chance," with a nod of his head in the direction of the island where they had left the ninety-one of the *Saginaw's* crew waiting for them.

"We'll make it, sir," asserted Halford.

"You'll use your influence with the men, Halford," Talbot went on. "They depend on you; they believe in you."

"Thank you, sir, but it won't be needed, sir," Halford returned. "They all knew what they were doing when they volunteered, and they'll die game, every one of them, never fear for that."

"I'm not afraid they won't, Halford. But I wanted to speak to you. I wanted to tell you our situation, and have you explain it to the men, quietly. I'll tell them myself, of course, but I'd like to have you make a chance to prepare them, so the truth will not give them too much of a shock."

"Aye, aye, sir," returned the coxswain, and Lieutenant Talbot turned in with the men.

The wind had been freshening throughout the

evening, and the sea had grown ugly. Halford, at the tiller, was on the constant lookout to prevent waves from breaking over the low sides of the gig. He was weak and sick, but the others were weaker and sicker than he, so he kept his post beyond the end of his watch, thinking to let them rest. He would wait until one of them woke up.

He looked out over the tumbling sea, dark and ominous under the gray light of the few stars which the sea and cloudy sky caught and held. The loneliness oppressed him for a moment. He thought of the many, many leagues of these waste waters that they must traverse before they came to Honolulu. He thought of the men waiting for their rescue on the little island of sand ; of John Polley, the boy who worshiped him as a hero. He was proud of that worship ; he was very glad the boy had not been allowed to come. For a moment, thinking of the lad, he forgot his task.

A comber that he had not seen approaching leaped up alongside, burst into a raging cataract, and dashed across the gig. It caught her by the stern and twisted her up into the wind, spilling the sails. Halford was nearly swept away. He thrust the tiller hard over, brought her back before the wind, dodged two other large combers, and straightened her out on her course again. He looked at the compass, to make sure that he was pointed right. He could not see the face of it. Then, for the first time he noticed that the lantern, which had been

lashed close at hand, was not burning. He reached for it, thinking to light it again. It was gone. The sea had carried it away. Somewhere beneath those surges in their wake it was slowly drifting toward the bottom. Weird and unknown fishes were nosing it wonderingly. The fancy struck him: what would those fishes think of the bodies of five men floating down among them? Perhaps there would be an old finny fellow in the company who had seen the corpse of a drowned sailor before and who would tell his companions what they were. But had any of them ever seen a lantern? He laughed to himself over the fancy as he fumbled for a match with which he might read the compass.

But his matches were all wet; they would not take fire. There was nothing to be done but to steer by wind and wave, and wait for the morning light to show them their course on the needle.

"There's one thing about losing the lantern," said Halford, in the morning, when the crew were discussing it, which they did at length, for there was little enough for them to talk about. "There's one thing. We can have that five gallons of sperm oil we brought to use for the lantern as a sauce on our porridge."

They tried it that morning on their spoonfuls of dessicated potatoes soaked in water, but they were too sick and weak to retain it. All but Halford. He was stronger than the others. He ate it heartily. "Sorry, boys," he said, smacking his lips as though

he liked it. It was his habit to make the best of things.

Day after day they dragged their weary way across the sea, with no ray of sunshine to warm and dry them, and give them cheer. Sometimes the wind only teased them with a vagrant puff now and then, and they tried their oars, feebly, gaining little. On other days it blew fresh, brisking at intervals into a storm which threatened every minute to swamp them. Weak as they were from illness and lack of food, they had to struggle to their feet and fight the storm, reefing sail, bailing ship, dodging huge waves. Always they were wet through; always they were tossed about and beaten against each other by the floundering of their tiny ship. And when they could stand it no longer; when their limp limbs sank beneath them, they must arise and fight again, for the storm never wearied.

One day the storm winds outdid themselves. Their force was so great that the voyagers took in all their sails, and the little gig drove under its bare pole. The rudder was not sufficient to keep them on their course, and they manned the oars. Seas came aboard continually. At last, one sea, more towering than its fellows, swept over them with a rush that jerked the oars out of their weakened grasp and carried them overboard. They left their seats on the thwarts and lay in the bottom of the boat, trusting to fate. They had done all they could do. And fate was good to them, for the wind soon blew itself out,

and the sea ran down. They made sail again and went on their course.

Through all their struggle they felt the pangs of ever-growing hunger. Two spoonfuls a day, measured out of their scanty store, was all they could have, and when that was eaten hunger still gnawed. Daily, hourly they grew weaker. Leaving one man to sail the boat, the others would lie in the bottom, unless the storm demanded of them to get up and fight, saying nothing, doing nothing, thinking nothing, like dumb animals, waiting.

All but Halford. He was stronger than the others. He could eat the sperm oil, and he found it food. He stood his trick at the tiller, and often took the turns of the other men. He tried to cheer them with yarns and sailors' jokes; he made light of their experiences, as though they were nothing. They paid no heed to him, lying in the bottom of the boat, thinking of nothing, saying nothing, save that now and then one of them would snarl out against Halford's chatter. Halford would smile at that, for the outburst was a sign that fight was still left in the man.

December came, and still they sailed, fighting their way across the trackless wilderness of gray water. A gaunt sight they would have been if any could have looked down on them. Four men, with faces gray as death and skin taut on their cheeks, staring with glistening eyes that saw nothing into the gray sky above, while the gray sea swirled be-

neath. And a fifth, teeth set, tense, clutching the tiller and searching the horizon for something—anything. And over it all silence, an utter silence; for by degrees Halford ceased to speak with his companions. The effort was too great. A gaunt, gaunt sight.

Twenty-five days had passed since they left the island, and still they had not picked up the loom of the Sandwich Islands. Perhaps they had lost their reckoning. The sun had not been clear for taking their sights on any day, and Lieutenant Talbot was so weak, so sick, that he might have made an error in working out their position.

Lieutenant Talbot, serving the rations on the twenty-fifth day, scraped the bottom of the box which had held the dessicated potatoes. There was barely the spoonful apiece for each of them. "That is all there is left," he said.

They mixed it with water, and ate it without another word.

But at noon, when the lieutenant took the sight on the cloud-blurred sun and was working out the position of the craft, bending and mumbling over the figures, he burst out laughing and crying, and kept it up until Halford crawled over to where he was and shook him back to his senses.

The next day was fine. The clouds cleared away and the sun came out bright and warm, for the first time since they started. The men gazed eagerly out across the sea, running in sparkling waves about

them, searching for the loom of an island. But there was no sight of one.

Halford was at the tiller. The men were sleeping again in the bottom of the boat. The warmth of the sun comforted them and brought them more strength; they did not lie staring into the sky now. Occasionally one of them would awaken, struggle to his knees, crawl to the edge of the gig, and look out across the waters wistfully, hungrily, for sight of land, only to fall back again and sleep.

Halford, dropping into a doze with the tiller in his hand, and dreaming of John Polley on the island of sand, was startled into wakefulness by a rustling sound at his ear. He looked around, and saw a bird, a booby, perched on the gunwale of the gig gazing stupidly at the men in the bottom of the boat. The bird was an arm's length away. Halford stared at it for a moment before his brain would work. At last an idea struck him. Here was food. He gathered all his wits and strength, and, with a sudden stretch of his hand, grasped the bird by one leg, just as it was starting to fly off, alarmed by his movement.

He wrung its neck, stripped the feathers from it, and cut it into five pieces. Then he awakened his companions, and gave them each a piece. They ate it just as it was, warm, raw, bleeding. That, and water, was all they had that day.

The next day a flying fish flew against Halford's cheek, and fell to the bottom of the boat. The fish

was tiny, not more than three inches long ; it was only a mouthful for one man ; the others were sleeping in the bottom. Halford ate it.

Presently a school of them came scurrying along over the top of the water. Six of them, lifting over the boat, struck the sail and fell inside. Halford gathered them up, awoke his companions, and distributed the food from the sky.

That was the last they had to eat for two days. The men no longer crept to the side of the gig to look out over the sea in search of land. They were too weak. Only when it was needful to work ship, to shift sail or man the rudder, did they stir from the gig's bottom. For hour after hour they would lie in complete silence, saying nothing, thinking nothing.

Another day came. The man steering awoke them at dawn with a cry of gladness and hope. They scrambled to their feet. There, far off, dim in the haze of the dawn, was the low loom of land. They had come upon an island. What island they could not know, but it must be one of the Sandwich group. Before night they would be there. Hope revived life in them ; they fell to talking once more. Halford took out his pipe and put it in his mouth. He could not smoke it ; his tobacco was wet, and there was nothing with which to strike a light, but he put it in his mouth and pulled on it with a feeling of comfort.

Sitting, with pipe in mouth, gazing toward the

distant land, Halford observed clouds gathering above it. At first he thought it was only a mass of trade-wind clouds, but soon his trained eye perceived that it was more. He watched it for a space before he spoke. Then he called the attention of Lieutenant Talbot to the appearance. While they were yet discussing it a ripple passed over the waves from the direction of the land, and they felt the first puff of a growing breeze in their faces.

In an hour the breeze had increased to a fresh breeze ; in another it was a gale, blowing in their teeth. They had shortened sail before it came on so strong. Now they hove to, under a close-reefed jib.

All day the wind blew. Toward night it hauled abeam. They got a little more sail on the gig, at the risk of being capsized, and managed to work in closer to the island. In the morning the loom of the land was bigger than it had been the night before. All that day they fought their way through the choppy seas, carrying what sail they could. It was weary, weary work. They had nothing to eat ; it became a bitter fight between starvation and strength of purpose. If the land had not been in sight before them, they must surely have given up, and lain down to die in the bottom of the boat. All but Halford. He was still stronger than the others, although pitiably weak.

In the afternoon of the second day of the blow the wind hauled again, coming more astern, and they made toward the island at a fair rate of speed.

They could not make out the coast upon which they had come. For the most part it was a cliff overhanging the sea. Here and there they could discern a break in the cliff, and low ground leading down to the sea. And here and there a waterfall tumbled over the cliff; a white ribbon against the green plush of the tropical foliage. Those coasts are renowned for their beauty, but never were they more beautiful to human eyes than on that afternoon when the weary, starving mariners looked upon them after thirty-one days on the tossing Pacific.

No town or sign of habitation appeared to the five in the boat. It was a lonely coast, but they knew that if they once got on shore they could find some one living there. A plantation, perhaps, or a native settlement. The natives were scattered all along the lonely coasts of the Sandwich Islands.

They headed the gig for one of the breaks in the precipice, keeping a sharp lookout for the reef, which they expected to find in front of the beach. Night came before they could make shore. They knew that it would be safer to wait until morning before attempting to land, but another night without food and there might be none of them left to take her in; none, that is, but Halford. And another contrary wind might drive them to sea again.

They decided to push ahead, and trust to good fortune to get over the reef in the dark. Already they could hear the breakers. Do not believe that the sea tumbles high against an island coast only

when there is a storm. Always and forever the mighty swells, gathering depth and head for thousands of miles as they swing through the mid-Pacific, rush into the shallows with a wild roar, and dash themselves into tumultuous cataracts.

With their last strength summoned for the final effort, they approached the bellowing reef, watchful, alert. Closer and closer they went, straight for the low place which they could still see in the dusk dipping down from the high sky-line of the cliffs. The reef shouted in their ears ; they were already among the breakers. Lieutenant Talbot, scarcely able to stand, took the tiller, with Halford to help him. Little good in a tiller then ! They needed their oars to help them through the great combers. But the oars were adrift somewhere out on the waste of waters that tossed and tumbled between them and the ninety-one shipwrecked sailors on Ocean Island.

Farther and farther into the breakers they drove, closer and closer to the reef. Beyond the reef was a mile of smooth water. Once there, and they could paddle themselves ashore.

A stretch of not more than five fathoms separated them from the smooth water. The breakers between them and safety were higher, more savage than those they had come through, but the distance was short. Each following wave, catching them up to the sky, drove them farther ; foot by foot they were gaining safety.

They were beginning to breathe more easily, when

one wave more fierce than the others caught the gig in its comb, and flung it over. Three times it turned and twisted in the cataract of tumbling water. The mast was snapped off with the first turn ; sails and ropes were scattered in the water.

William Halford, stronger than the others from the beginning, grasped the wreckage and clung to it, while wave after wave hurled itself over him. Between the waves he could see that no one was left in the boat. Whether they had been swept out and drowned, or whether they had saved themselves, he could not tell. One thought filled his mind. He thought of those ninety-one men marooned on the little spit of sand they had left a month before, already beginning to feel the pinch of hunger. He thought of John Polley, the mess boy who had chosen him for his hero. He saw them all in his mind's eye, sitting on the sand gazing seaward, waiting. He saw the look in the eyes of the lad. And he knew that if some one of the five who had come in the gig did not get ashore, those ninety men, and the boy, must surely die.

The thought gave him new strength ; a strength that seemed to come flowing into his body from without. He kept his head, and clung to the wreckage, waiting for the gig to be carried over into smooth water. It was still afloat and right side up. Presently it slid over the last breakers and came to rest in the lagoon, half filled with water, battered, wrecked, but still afloat.

Halford climbed in. There was no sign of the four. Slowly, slowly, the gig drifted toward the shore. When she had come to within a few fathoms, Halford got out the despatch box, containing the report of the wreck of the *Saginaw*, made it fast to his shoulders with lashings, slipped overboard, and struck out for the shore. He could see it looming ahead of him in the faint light of many stars.

After a time that seemed to him an eternity he felt the bottom beneath his knees, crawled a few feet, and sank down. He knew no more.

When he awoke his feet were in the sea and his head on the sand of a beach. It was broad daylight. He tried to get up, but could not. One of his knees was badly hurt; he was not able to bend it.

He raised his head and looked about for the gig. It was nowhere in sight. He looked for some of his companions. They were not to be seen. He tried once more to get up, but his stiff knee pained him too severely. He sank back on the sand.

Near him he saw a piece of drift-wood; a broken branch with a smaller branch near one end, forming a crotch. The branch was four or five feet long; the crotch was at one end. He reached out and picked it up. With that as a crutch he got on his feet.

Twenty feet from where he had landed was a sheer cliff. If he had gone in there instead of where he was he would have been ground to pieces in the

surf. In front of him, through a break in the cliff, the land came shelving down to the beach. He thought he saw dim traces of a trail going up the slope. He hobbled to the foot of the path, and began to climb, with great pain, and very slowly. More than once he would have given up, if his own life had been the only one depending upon him. But there were the ninety men on Ocean Island—and the boy, John Polley.

He gave out when he was near the top, and had to sit down to rest. He was trying to force himself to rise, against an almost irresistible desire to lie down and sleep, when he heard steps coming toward him down the trail. The bushes parted close by, and a native man appeared before him.

Not until he saw the native's expression did Halford realize what a spectacle he presented. Haggard, almost without clothes, and those that he had clinging wet to his shrunken limbs, his hair filled with the sand of the beach, his staring eyes glistening with a wild light, he was a sight to frighten any one stumbling across him sitting by the side of a lonely trail near the sea.

The native was clearly frightened ; too frightened, apparently, to move, or cry out. Halford reached up his arms toward him in a gesture of appeal. "Aloha," he said. It was the one Kanaka word he knew. It is their universal salutation and greeting, meaning more than any one word or phrase we have.

The man was sufficiently relieved of his fear to shout. Others came running. They stood about Halford, talking excitedly. Gradually reassured by their numbers, and Halford's repetition of the word "Aloha," and perceiving that the strange man needed help, they made bold to lift him to his feet and take him to their huts, not far off in a little tropical valley. The natives of Hawaii are a gentle, kindly race.

The rest is soon told. One of them went running for a half-white living near by who could speak English. The half-white came, heard the story, and took Halford to a plantation where a white man lived. The man's name was Bent. Mr. Bent cared for him for two days, feeding him a little at a time until he could take more food, and then procured for him a native schooner which took him to Honolulu. The island where he had landed was Kauai, ninety miles from Honolulu.

The people of Honolulu, hearing Halford's story, rushed to the assistance of the shipwrecked men on Ocean Island. Before night a schooner was despatched, laden with provisions and medical supplies. The next day a steamer set out.

The steamer was the first to reach Ocean Island. The entire crew was found alive, and in good health. Commander Sicard had kept them busy building a schooner from the wreckage of the *Saginaw*. The vessel was nearly completed. Undoubtedly they would have set sail in a few days, if the steamer

had not come, in the belief that the gig had never reached its destination. It is well that they did not have to trust themselves to it.

Halford went from Honolulu to San Francisco on the first steamer, and spent some time in the Marine Hospital at Mare Island. He was afterward made a gunner and given a Medal of Honor by Congress for his heroic bravery in bringing news of the wreck to Honolulu. He was almost as proud of the honor as John Polley was.

The others who had been in the captain's gig with Halford were never found. They had been drowned in the surf when the boat overturned. They had done their duty, and paid with their lives for the safety of their companions of the *Saginaw*. It was a heavy price, but they paid it gladly. Their heroism is not unrewarded. They will be spoken of with tender respect as long as virtue and valor are dear to the American heart, which will be forever.

Remember their names. Lieutenant Talbot, Peter Francis, James Muir, and John Andrews.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAN BEHIND THE MEN

“CAPTURE or destroy the Spanish squadron at Manila.”

Over lands and under seas, half-way over the round earth, the message flashed from Washington to Commodore George Dewey, at the British port of Hongkong, in China, on the twenty-fifth of April, 1898. Two months before the battle-ship *Maine* had been blown up in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, and now the United States, incensed and outraged by the destruction of the lives of its sailors in a Spanish port, had declared war, and flashed the order for the capture or destruction of the Spanish squadron at Manila.

And George Dewey, fighting man, grizzled graduate of many a bloody fight, in command of half a dozen little war-ships that were the sport and jest of the sailors of other nations foregathered in that distant quarter of the globe, set his chin, and made ready to do his duty. Alone at the ends of the earth, six thousand miles from a friendly port, laughed at by fellows of his craft, he prepared to carry out the order to “capture or destroy” a fleet of unknown force in a harbor that was unknown. Stories were being told up and down the China coast

of the horrid strength of the defenses of Manila Bay ; of forts swarming with Krupp guns ; of a mesh of mines that underlay the harbor entrances, ready to hurl to destruction any hostile craft that ventured among them ; of a stout and sturdy fleet lying in wait for whatever victim might escape the first dangers that beset the mouth of the bay. This was the fleet he must " capture or destroy."

Perhaps his thoughts ran back to that time thirty-seven years before when he had been second lieutenant on Farragut's flag-ship, the *Mississippi*, that day the Union fleet battered the Confederate forts at the mouth of the Mississippi River ; perhaps he thrilled again in memory of the hour when the same ship lay stranded and helpless under the guns of Port Hudson, and he lingered on her decks with the last, spiking her guns, leaving only with the captain a moment before fire reached her magazine and flung her in slivers into the air ; perhaps his heart beat to the remembered boom of the great guns that had roared in the two attacks on Fort Fisher ; perhaps the joy of fighting warmed within him. But there was no sign in the face and manner of the man ; he went about his task like one whose trade and craft it is to " capture and destroy " hostile fleets, in whatever part of the world they may lurk.

Five days later the six fighting ships of the Asiatic squadron, with their three attendants, were steaming along the shores of Luzon, an island in the Philippines on which is the city of Manila, for

centuries an outpost of Old Spain. Somewhere ahead of them the shores broke open into a long, wide bay, on whose banks, twenty miles from the entrance, stood the ancient city. On both lips of the entrance, and on two islands that lay in the channels, were the forts which the stories said were bristling with heavy guns. Beyond them were the mines, and beyond the mines, shores lined and fringed with batteries and forts. Amongst them all was the fleet to be destroyed.

Grim and gray in their war paint, the six sailed on, creeping and feeling up the coast on the watch for the enemy, who might come out to meet them. They poked their steel noses into Subig Bay, thinking the Spanish might be there, and then, across the soft-heaving, smooth and sunlit tropic sea they churned forward toward Manila. Night came; a gray night, with the moon behind clouds; a night with a sluggish, leaden sea, across which heaved and muttered the war-ships.

It was midnight when they reached the mouth of the bay. Every light on the war vessels was put out excepting one hanging at the stern of each so that the next could see where to follow. These lights were shielded; they could be seen only from astern, and not at all from the shore.

In through the jaws of the entrance stretched the leaden sheet of the sea, pierced by the islands where forts were supposed to be; one flat island, and the other a towering bulk, four hundred feet high; El

Fraile and Corregidor. Beyond was the bay, mysterious with the possibility of destruction, unmarked by light or buoy, dreadful with mines, across which the Americans must track to the squadron that was to be destroyed. The *Olympia*, Dewey's flag-ship, turned her nose shoreward and pressed for the entrance, followed by the others in line.

The silence of a thousand men was upon the ships as they stole into the entrance. They stood about, wakeful and alert, not knowing at what moment the guns of which they had heard so much might open on them, or the bottom of the sea heave up with an exploding mine. The strain on nerves was tremendous. Orders passed now and then along the lines in strained whispers; hearts beat fast; rasping sighs of suspense broke from breasts that knew no fear. It is hard to walk up into the face of death and not be able to look it in the eye.

A light flashed on one of the islands, and was answered by a rocket. The men drew breath, expecting the next moment to hear the rushing boom of guns and the clanging crash of shot against the iron of their ships. But the gray monsters slid onward undisturbed.

They were well inside when a coal-heaver on board the *McCullough*, a small vessel of the revenue service, threw on some soft coal. A torrent of fiery sparks burst forth from the funnel; the entire fleet looked on at the fiery, spurting smoke. Surely even

a Spaniard must see such a sight in the midst of his harbor !

A Spaniard did. There was a flash on the shore of one of the islands, and a shot struck the water in front of the *McCullough*, followed by the sound of the gun that had fired ; the shot had sped faster than the noise. Another gun, and another, roared into the night, answered by guns from the fleet.

"Remember the *Maine* !" cried the sailors at their posts. "Remember the *Maine* !" The thought of their brothers slain in the harbor of Havana madened them ; they exulted in the joy of striking back in revenge.

But the time was not yet. One shell from the *Concord* burst directly over the spot whence the Spaniards were firing, and there were no more shots from shore. The harbor entrance, "bristling with terrible guns," was safely passed. But ahead lay fields of mines, and the other forts, and the fleet that was to be captured or destroyed.

On the bridge of the *Olympia* stood Commodore Dewey. With him were Lieutenant Rees and Lieutenant Calkins, the pilot who was to lead the fleet across the unmarked gray harbor to the city, its scattered lights faint points far to the north. History was in their hands that early morning.

Slowly the gray warmed to a brighter gray in the east, and the day gave warning of its approach. Imperceptibly the light crept over the water, as the little fleet of American ships churned slowly forward,

and at last the anxious eyes on the vessels made out the enemy's squadron behind the battery of Cavite, six miles short of Manila.

Five o'clock came, and the signal burst from the peak of the *Olympia*: "Prepare for action." They were ready, those men, with the memory of the *Maine* hot in their minds. They were more than ready.

Past Cavite the fleet steamed, prepared for action, every man at his post, stokers far below in the engine room, not knowing when a shell might pierce the boilers overhead and let down upon them death in scalding steam; engineers prowling in the clanking engine; ammunition men at the bottoms of the hoists; gunners standing by their guns; officers on the bridge, all nerves taut and strung for the fight that meant glory or destruction.

Cavite leaped into resounding flame, and metal hurtled across the waters in a sheet, churning the surface, sending spouts and jets to fall back again in tinkling splashes. No answer came from the American fleet. Malate, south of the city, opened up; the batteries on the sea wall; the forts beyond. The gray monsters wound through the torrent of fire untouched and silent.

Suddenly the water in front of the *Baltimore* bulged and broke into a lifting mass that rose high in air and fell back with a roaring gush. One of the submarine torpedoes had been fired. Each man gripped himself and braced his nerves against the next that

should explode, not knowing whether it might not be beneath the keel of his own vessel; not knowing whether he might not in an instant be tossed aloft in the midst of a tangle of twisted iron that would descend and sink beneath the water, dragging his mangled body with it. Their arms ached to be at the enemy; but up on the bridge of the *Olympia*, grizzled and grim, stood the man who had history in his hand, not making a motion in reply.

They bent in a wide sweep in front of Manila and turned back toward Cavite, closer inshore, passing obliquely toward the Spanish squadron in line across the bay behind Cavite point; nine vessels of war in all, commanded by the brave Admiral Montojo, manned by the courage of Castile. "Capture or destroy the Spanish squadron at Manila," the order from Washington had read. Here, then, was the squadron that was to be captured or destroyed.

The Spanish fleet was barking at the Americans. Their shots, at first falling short in the water, began to climb farther and farther toward the American vessels. Presently they thumped close at hand, or passed across, sputtering in the air. Dewey, calm, cool, quiet, glanced at the shore. "About five thousand yards I should say, eh, Rees?" He turned the question to Lieutenant Rees, standing beside him.

"Between five and six, I should say, sir," returned the lieutenant. They might have been discussing the probability of rain, so unconcerned were their tones.

Dewey leaned over the bridge ; Captain Gridley stood below on the main deck. "When you are ready you may fire, Gridley," he said, quietly.

The pent-up roar that burst from the guns of the *Olympia* on the instant told how ready they were. The bridge quivered and heaved from the shock of the guns ; the vessel trembled and quavered. It was like a blow.

All along the line of vessels reaching behind the terrible din shook into the air. "Remember the *Maine* ! Remember the *Maine* !" rang the cry. It reached the ears of the Spaniards on their ships ; swarthy faces turned pale to hear it. The time of vengeance was at hand.

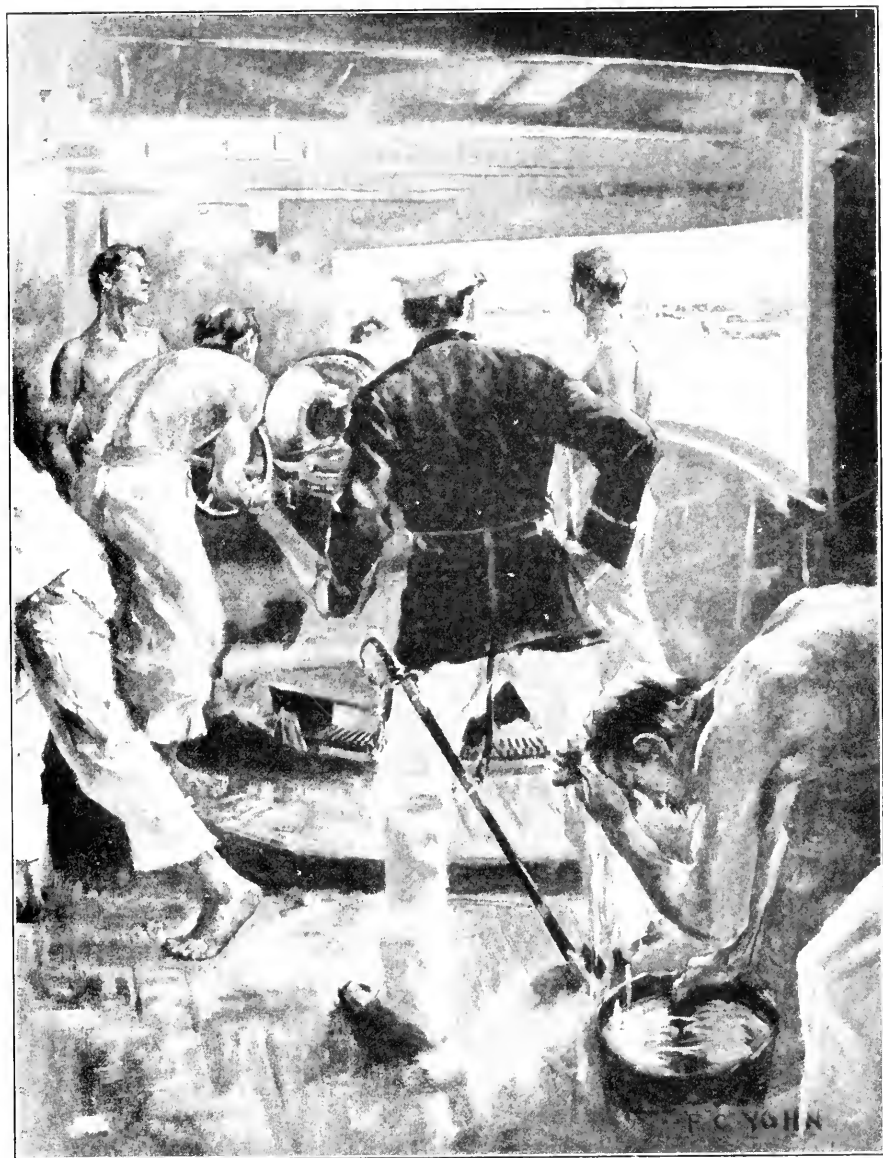
Once, twice, six times the American vessels twisted back and forth in front of the doomed enemy, each time drawing closer. Their mighty broadsides beat and pulsed like a great clock of doom, punctuating the incessant roar of the Spanish guns of fleet and forts. Now here, now there, the Americans—the "Yankee pigs"—turned their fire, hurling all their force on this vessel and on that of the enemy. Sublime and terrible struggle !

Great holes, beaten through the iron sides of the Spanish ships, yawned wider with each pulsing broadside. They tottered under the blows, their sides sagging and crumpling up. Fires broke out and burned behind the Spaniards, fighting frantically at their guns. Incessantly, relentlessly, the American solid shot and shell clanked against the iron

ships, beating them into masses of junk ; the aim of the men behind the guns was deadly in its accuracy.

Do not believe that the Spaniards were not brave. But it takes more than bravery to win a fight. The Spanish fire was wild. Scarcely a shot of the myriad that swept across the waters of the bay found a target. Now and then one thunked with a sharp twang against a ship's side, passing harmlessly through, or exploding where it did no hurt. One, entering the *Baltimore*, glanced this way and that, leaving holes where it passed, until finally it hit a ventilator and spent itself spinning on the deck. In its course it passed through a box of ammunition for a three-pounder, exploding the powder and hurting six men. But they would not go below into the sick bay ; the surgeon's instruments lay spread unused on the operating tables.

At the third tightening turn of the American vessels, Admiral Montojo, frantic under the punishment his vessel, the *Reina Christina*, was receiving, slipped cable and steamed out toward the *Raleigh*. Instantly she drew the fire of the entire American fleet. Reeling under the blows, she turned and started back. As she turned a gunner in the forward turret of the *Olympia* aimed an eight-inch gun at her stern, directed toward him at the time. Delicately as though it had been a squirrel rifle, he pointed the weighty mass of metal, twenty-eight feet long, at the exposed end of the enemy's flag-ship. The shell ripped its way through, from end to end,



ON BOARD THE OLYMPIA, BATTLE OF MANILA BAY

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tearing down bulwarks and slaying men in its course. The *Reina Christina* limped into line a wreck, and the admiral transferred his flag to the *Isla de Cuba*, just as Captain Perry had once transferred his from the *Lawrence* to the *Niagara*. But Montojo was not a Perry.

What was that creeping out from the shelter of Cavite? That low-lying tiny craft? The alarm ran through the fleet that it was a torpedo boat. Every gun was turned upon it. It stopped, hesitated, turned, and drifted slowly back, bringing up on shore. The men were relieved. They did not know until the fight was ended that the "torpedo boat" was nothing but a private launch belonging to an Englishman that had put out to meet an expected ship and bring off a trunk that was thought to be aboard. By great good luck no shot from the fleet reached the little craft; its Philippino crew cowered in safety in the bottom of it.

Two hours had passed, when a more alarming rumor ran through the fleet. Somebody had said that only fifteen rounds of ammunition remained to each gun. Dewey, standing on the bridge of the *Olympia*, heard the tale. He turned to Lieutenant Rees. "What time is it, Rees?" he asked.

"Seven forty-five, sir."

Dewey smiled grimly. "Breakfast time," he said. "Run up the signals to 'cease firing' and to 'follow me.'" There would be time to finish the work after breakfast. The men had been awake and alert all

night, with nothing but a cup of coffee, and the joy of fighting, to sustain them.

A mutter of disappointment ran through the crews as the vessels drew away into the bay. They could not understand why the work was left undone ; why they must quit as long as there were fifteen rounds of shot left in their magazines.

It was a strange breakfast those smoke-grimed sailors ate under the tropical sky in the distant port that May morning. Two hours before they had grappled with an unknown fate ; now they were conquerors, only waiting to complete their work. Alone, six thousand miles from possible support, they sat down to their coffee and bread with gay hearts, discussing, as they ate, the shots they had fired.

The commanders of the various ships gathered on the decks of the *Olympia* to report the conditions of their vessels. Not a man had been killed or seriously hurt, not a gun was out of working order, not a ship disabled ! "All in good order, sir, except that it was very hot," reported Captain Wildes of the *Boston* ; —Captain Wildes, who had drunk his coffee on the bridge in the heat of action in as quiet comfort as though he had been on his summer porch at home. "Men tired, and ship a little scratched," said Captain Dyer of the *Baltimore*. "Everything all right, and ready to resume business at a moment's notice," declared Commander Walker of the *Concord*. "Poor Randall died from heart failure as we were passing

Corregidor, but that is the extent of our casualties," remarked Captain Hodgson, of the *McCullough*; Randall was chief engineer of the revenue cutter.

For three hours the fleet drifted about the waters of the bay, resting; the sailors cleaning up the marks of battle and making ready to renew it. The story about the ammunition was proven false; there was plenty left. Meanwhile, on the Spanish ships, there was a tremendous hubbub. Three of them were in flames; the others little better than wrecks. The Spaniards rushed up and down their decks, trying to patch up the damages they had received. Guns were dismounted and cluttered with wreckage torn loose by the American shots. Dead bodies lay about; blood oozed through the scuppers. The cries and screams of the wounded came to the ears of the Americans, quietly at breakfast in the bay.

In three hours they returned to complete the order that had come over land and under seas from Washington. The *Baltimore*, in the lead this time, picked up Sangley Point battery, silenced it in a few rounds, and bore in upon the *Reina Christina*, now little better than a wreck, and afire. A few shots and she blew up, the fire having crept to her magazine.

The *Concord* ran in to destroy a transport, which took fire in a few minutes and was abandoned by the soldiers on her. A shell from the *Raleigh* in the magazine of the *Austria*, which was receiving the fire of two or three of the Americans, disposed of that vessel. The *Concord* made an end of the *Gen-*

eral Lezo. The *Baltimore* and *Concord*, turning their attention to the *Castilla*, soon had her afire. Her men opened the sea cocks to let in the water, hoping the flames would not reach the ammunition rooms. Only the *Don Antonio de Ulloa* was left. She fought madly, with all her companions lying about, flaming wrecks, or sunk in the shoal water; their upper works above the waves marking where they had gone down. The fight was hopeless; it was worse than hopeless. The *Ulloa* was a complete wreck, battered and torn by the merciless hail of steel that bore upon her from the American guns. The *Petrel*, running into the bay behind Cavite in chase of three small gunboats that were endeavoring to escape, destroyed them, and five other smaller craft she found. At half-past twelve, an hour after the second round had begun, not a Spanish flag was flying in the bay except one on the staff of the *Don Antonio de Ulloa*. The *Isla de Cuba*, on which Montojo had taken refuge, was a wreck. Not a gun was in commission; not a man was on her decks. Sadly the brave Montojo hauled down his flag and went ashore, making his way to Manila through the crowd of sightseers that had come to witness the destruction of the "Yankee pigs."

The fight was won. The order flashed around the world had been carried out. The *Maine* had been avenged.

CHAPTER XII

“ VALIENTE ”

ON the afternoon of May 29, 1898, the armored cruiser *New York*, Admiral Sampson's flag-ship, lay at Key West, coaling. Clinging all along her war-painted sides were dirty, grimy little lighters. The air was full of coal dust ; the ship was a mess from stem to stern. There was a great racket of buckets and hoists and donkey engines and shouting of men. The *New York* was coaling in a hurry. So was the *Oregon*, that had just arrived from its race around the Horn.

Something had happened in Cuban waters. For a long time the entire American squadron had been on the jump, looking for the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera, which had left Spain and was expected anywhere and everywhere. Wild rumors had been running up and down the sea and land ; no one knew where the Spaniards were, or where they were going.

Then news had reached Admiral Sampson, who was in and out of the passages through the Bahama Islands, that Cervera had slipped around to the east of Cuba and had run into the harbor of Santiago, on the south coast. Commodore Schley was in command in those waters. Admiral Sampson sent the

New Orleans down to Santiago to help Schley hold the Spanish fleet, and went piling through the sea to Key West to coal.

In the midst of the fuss and dust and racket of the coaling, some one was having a quiet talk with Admiral Sampson. He was a quiet young man in the uniform of a lieutenant of the United States Navy. He was tall and slender. His neck was long. His eyes, rather deep in his head, gazed on the face of Admiral Sampson without a quaver. They were sober, serious eyes ; it was hard to think of them as smiling.

The name of the young man was Richmond Pearson Hobson. He was an instructor of construction in the naval academy at Annapolis. He knew much about building ships. He was trying to interest Admiral Sampson in a scheme for the building of some unsinkable ships to be used in the reduction of the defenses of Havana harbor.

"It is not a question of an unsinkable boat, but of a sinkable," said the admiral.

The quiet young man waited for the admiral to make his meaning clear. The harbor of Santiago is a flask with a crooked neck. The city is at the large part of the flask, and the neck of it gives into the sea. The neck is slim and crooked and lined with high, jungle-covered banks. One wall of the harbor entrance is a cliff, capped by Morro Castle. Twisting through the crooked neck is a thin ship-channel. Admiral Sampson wanted to put a stop-

per in the bottle and leave the Spanish flies to buzz while he went about his own affairs with the fleet. He wanted to make it impossible for Cervera to get out, so that the entire American naval force would not be needed to watch him. It was out of the question to enter the harbor and annihilate the Spaniards, as Dewey had done at Manila. The batteries that lined the neck of the bottle would blow out of the water any vessel that tried that ; or, if the guns failed to destroy it, the mines would complete the work.

"What we want is a vessel that will sink in the channel rapidly, and block it up," repeated Admiral Sampson, when he had outlined the situation.

That was the beginning of it all.

Two days later the iron collier *Merrimac*, off the harbor of Santiago, was aswarm with crowds of busy men. Hobson was going to sink her in the channel and shut up the Spanish fleet. The thing had been arranged to the least detail by the tall young lieutenant with the deep-set eyes that had no lurk of a smile in them. He would take the collier in under the guns of the batteries, ride her to where the channel was narrowest, twist her across it with helm and anchor, blow her sides in with torpedoes, and hold her there until she sank to the bottom. He would do it all with only six men to help him.

Think what it meant to do that. No one knew how many batteries lined the neck of the bottle, or how many mines lay along its bottom. Somewhere

inside was the Spanish fleet, with ready guns, lying in wait. The *Merrimac* would be laced back and forth by crossing ribbons of steel. There could be no doubt about it. Of course, they would try to steal in early on Thursday morning, before the moon went down and the sun came up, but they would be discovered and fired upon long before they could reach the place where Lieutenant Hobson had decided he would sink the *Merrimac*.

With all this fire sheeting across the channel, how could those in the collier expect to get as far up the channel as they would have to get if their stopper was to do any good? How could they expect to live from one minute to another before the blast of screaming steel? And if they should get to the spot they wished to reach, and sink the boat, what chance would they have to get away alive? Hobson had arranged for a return, but no one thought much about that part of the plan. The men who were going in the *Merrimac* were not figuring on how they were going to get back.

Here is something splendid; here is something that makes one glad he is an American! Almost without exception, all the men in the fleet wanted to go in the *Merrimac* when it was known what was to be done. Ships' crews volunteered bodily. They clamored to be taken, they argued, they pleaded, they offered months' pay for an exchange with those who had been chosen. Strange, isn't it, when they had small reason to hope that they would come back

alive? Strange; but you yourself would have done the same thing.

These six men were picked out: Phillips, a machinist on the *Merrimac*; Kelly, a water-tender on the *Merrimac*; Deignan, quartermaster on the *Merrimac*; Charette, from the *New York*, who had been with Hobson when the latter was a midshipman on the *Chicago*; Montague, chief master-at-arms on the *New York*, and Mullen, boatswain of the *New York*. Mullen did not go—but that belongs to another part of the story.

All day Wednesday men swarmed in and about the *Merrimac*. There was a great deal to be done, and it must be done before midnight, for they were going to run her in in the early morning of Thursday. They had to arrange ten torpedoes along her outside, ten or twelve feet below the water. The torpedoes were already made; charges of brown powder for the eight-inch guns, enclosed in metal cylinders and made water-proof. These torpedoes had to be connected by wires with firing batteries, each torpedo to have its own battery and wires. The wires were arranged so that the torpedoes could be fired from the deck, one at a time. The torpedoes were fastened to the side of the vessel by two ropes, one of them running about the vessel from prow to stern, and the other crossing around her, under her keel and over her deck. Belt lines and hogging lines, they were called.

That was only part of what must be done before

they could run her in. They had to arrange anchors at bow and stern to stop her when they had brought her to the right place. That was a hard thing to do. Hobson figured that she would be running four or five knots by the time they wanted to let go their anchors. That would put too much of a pull on the anchor chains; a vessel of seven thousand tons going five knots has a bit of a yank in its nose. So they had to arrange to take care of that yank.

To begin with, they roused all the chain out of the chain locker and laid it on deck. Then they got a long, new, heavy manilla hawser and made one end fast. At intervals along this hawser they fastened smaller manilla ropes, and bent the ends of these smaller ropes to the anchor chain at distances of five fathoms. When the anchor should be let go and begin to draw up on the chain, the pull would come on the smaller hawsers, which would stretch, resist, and then break. Each one stretching and breaking in succession would stop the headway of the boat a little; by the time the last one had been broken she would be so much slowed down that the anchor chain would probably not snap.

It was very important that the anchor chains should hold. Everything depended on them. They figured in the plan to hold the boat in the proper position while the torpedoes sank her. At a certain point in the channel Hobson was going to throw the *Merrimac's* helm to port, which would make her turn to the right. Then he was going to let the bow

anchor go from the starboard side. That would jerk her around still more to the right. At the same time, the torpedoes were to be fired. When she should be half turned across the channel, another anchor was to be let go from the stern on the right or starboard side, with just enough chain to bring the stern to a standstill at the same time that the bow anchor had held her forward. She would then be lying across the channel at the narrowest place, and there she would sink. You can see how important the anchors were.

They had much trouble arranging the chains and anchors ; especially the anchor for the stern. They could not get aft the large one that they expected to use, and had to splice two smaller ones together. It took all the men aboard ship to drag the huge chain out of the chain locker and get it to the starboard quarter.

All through the hot day Wednesday and far into the night the work went on. Lieutenant Crank, assistant engineer of the *Merrimac*, was down in the engine room getting the engine and boilers ready so that it would not be necessary to do any stoking as the ship ran in. The sea connections were fixed so that they could be thrown open to admit the sea at the proper time. At last, long after midnight, everything was ready. Admiral Sampson came on board to inspect, returned to the flag-ship, and the *Merrimac*, getting under way, swung into the course for the harbor. The moon was still an hour in the sky.

The men who were going had been working without eating or sleeping since early on Wednesday, under the strain of a race against time. They had passed through the last stages of physical fatigue, and were going now on sheer excitement and nerve force. They had got their second wind.

Slowly the doomed vessel picked up her way toward the entrance to the harbor. The dull mass of the mountains that came down to the water about it could be faintly made out in the half light of the failing moon. The men were at their positions, keyed up for the final moment. They were stripped to their underclothes. Each had on a belt carrying a revolver and cartridges. That was the uniform for the occasion.

As they were getting nearer and nearer the headland that marked the entrance the torpedo-boat *Porter* came fuming and burring up with an order from the admiral that the *Merrimac* should return. It was too late ; sunrise would be upon them and the light would be fatal. Hobson pleaded but the order was not changed. Slowly, sadly, they swung the head of the collier back and crept off to the blockading fleet.

The spell was broken. The men, strung to the highest tension, gave way and crumpled up. Some of them had worked for twenty-four hours without rest or food. Deignan, quartermaster at the wheel, sat down and went to sleep. Mullen was so exhausted that he could not rest. He had to be

ordered back to the *New York* to save him from going to pieces under the physical strain. That was why he did not go. He had worked harder than any one else, and with more responsibility.

Thursday was a weary day for them all. When you have made plans to go out and meet death half-way, you like to be about it and have it over with. They kept thinking throughout the day. If they had been permitted to go, they would by this time have known what was going to happen. They wanted very much to know what was going to happen; not so much whether they were going to die or not, but whether they were going to succeed in getting the cork properly into the neck of the bottle before they died.

But the longest day must come to an end, and midnight whirled around again. The moon came out clear; the heat of the day was gone, and the sea stretched sleepily under the tropic sky. Here and there the black hulking shadow of the blockading ships rested on the surface of the sea. Everything was quiet and serene; there was no light but the light of the moon.

Half-past one in the morning, and the *Merrimac* was standing in close to the entrance of Santiago harbor. A group of men in their underclothes, with life-buoys and revolvers belted to them, crouched on the bridge over a bucket of hot coffee that Charette had brought up from the engine room. Mullen was not there; his place had been taken by Murphy, a

coxswain from the *Iowa*. Another man, Clausen, coxswain of the *New York's* barge, was also added to the crew at the last minute.

The meal finished, the men went to their stations. Deignan steered. Murphy stood by the bow anchor. After letting that go, he was to fire torpedo number one. Charette, who was on the bridge with Hobson, was to fire torpedoes two and three, after one had gone. Deignan, putting the helm hard aport to bring the *Merrimac* across the channel, was to run down and fire number four. Clausen was the man to handle number five. Phillips and Kelly, down in the engine room, were to stop the engine on signal, open the sea valves, and then go on deck to fire six and eight. The raw ends of the firing wires lay ready on the deck. Montague was to stand by to let go the stern anchor.

They had taken some care for their own safety; they would win back to the squadron if they could. A life-boat had been filled with arms and hung over-side from a cargo boom. The men were to gather in the gangway, behind the bulwarks, opposite the life-boat, after they had tended to their duties, and await the order to get in. Hobson planned to have them get in as the *Merrimac* was sinking. They would cut the rope that held them to the cargo boom, and float off.

A catamaran life raft also was on deck. If the life-boat should be destroyed, they would make use of that. There was a cave under the cliff that the

Morro was on. They arranged to meet in the cave after the sinking of the ship. Lieutenant Powell, in the *New York's* launch, said that he would run in there and pick them up. If he was not able to do that, they would wait there until some chance came of getting to the squadron.

The moon was still an hour and a half high in the sky when the *Merrimac* steered in for the Morro. Ahead could be seen the dark masses of the mountains of Cuba, their outlines all run together in the faint light and distance. Everything was quiet and peaceful afloat and ashore. The blockading squadron was miles behind. The *Merrimac*, except for the tiny little launch that busied about in its wake, was alone on the sea.

As they headed in for the Morro they found that the *Merrimac* was sailing directly down the moon track. She was put to the southward to avoid that exposed position. The Morro began to show white on the top of the cliff where it was perched ; its outlines came out in the night glass.

They were two thousand yards from the entrance. No further use in trying to sneak in and surprise the Spaniards. They must have seen the vessel by this time, and wondered what it was up to. Now for a dash !

“Full speed ahead !” the signal went to the engine room. Kelly and Phillips gave her all she could take, and the doomed vessel drove through the water.

"Steady astarboard!"

"Steady astarboard, sir," and the vessel turned on her rudder like a thing that knew.

The foam began to fly from the anchors, hung over the side and trailing in the water. The sound of the plashing bow-waves quickened and rose, as the bow swung around to the northward and westward to head for the course in.

"Meet her!" was the order.

"Meet her, sir," came Deignan's response.

"Steady!"

"Steady, sir."

They were on the course for entering.

Charette was sent below to tell Phillips and Kelly that they were on the final run, and that the next signal would be for them to stop the engines, open the sea valves, and lay down to their torpedoes on deck. Both were directed to put on their life-preservers and revolvers, with cartridge belts, before leaving the engine room.

Now they were putting Morro off their bows to starboard, and dragging her farther and farther abeam as they pounded through the gray swells toward the entrance. The neck of the bottle was beginning to open up. The tall young man on the bridge, with the eyes that did not smile, could see through the night glass the walls and windows of Morro.

"Nothing to the westward," said the tall young man.

"Nothing to the westward, sir," from Deignan.

Morro bore northeast by north ; her high walls were distinct in the gray and yellow light of the failing moon. How much longer would it be before the Spaniards would begin to fire ?

"Port !"

"Port, sir."

"Steady !"

"Steady, sir."

"Port a little !"

"Port a little, sir."

Morro bore northeast. "Steady !"

"Steady, sir."

"Head for the Morro !"

"Head for the Morro, sir."

The night glasses picked up Estrella. The tall young man wanted to find Estrella ; it was a landmark. "Can you make out the white spot to the left of Morro ?" asked Hobson.

"Yes, sir," from Deignan.

"That is Estrella. Steer for Estrella."

"Steer for Estrella, sir."

There was a battery there ; perhaps two.

A swell was running into the neck of the bottle. It might yaw the *Merrimac* to port. "Watch the helm !" warned Lieutenant Hobson.

"Watch the helm, sir," echoed Deignan.

"Do not let her yaw, but use only a gentle helm."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Deignan was thinking of nothing but of his helm ;

the *Merrimac* was sliding into the narrow channel as truly as though she was a crack yacht. Morro lifted high in the sky, and the west side of the entrance began to break into view through the dim light. On the top of the west side was a bald spot. It was another battery. There were enough batteries to keep out a fleet.

Five hundred yards from the entrance! Why didn't the Spaniards let fly at them? They must have seen the *Merrimac* for a long time now.

Lieutenant Hobson, casting a quick eye about, saw that all was well. Let them fire if they would; the *Merrimac* had enough headway on her now to bring her in. And as soon as she got a little farther, the flowing tide would help. Nothing could keep the stopper out of the neck of the bottle. It only remained for him to sink the vessel in the right place.

A flash close to the water at the western side of the opening, opposite the Morro! Every one braced himself for the crash of steel against the ship; but there was no crash. Another flash; another miss. It was hard to believe that even a Spaniard could not hit such a target at such a range.

Lieutenant Hobson turned his night glass to the spot whence the flashes came. It was a picket boat, mounting rapid fire guns. He watched another flash, and in the instant understood what they were trying to do. The shot passed astern; they were aiming at the *Merrimac's* rudder!

A storm of helpless rage arose in the bosom of the quiet young man whose eyes did not often smile. They would have to go within a boat's length of the pilot-boat, with its rapid fire guns feeling around for the *Merrimac's* rudder. Nothing could be done. If there had been even one rapid fire gun aboard the collier there would have been a chance to silence the pilot fellow. They could do nothing but submit to the rough handling. If the enemy should succeed in disabling the rudder, the expedition would fail. All their heart-breaking work of the past two days, the destruction of the steamer, the possible loss of their own lives, would be for naught. The thought was maddening. Meanwhile, the rapid fire guns on the pilot-boat were barking and spitting as rapidly as they were able. Lieutenant Hobson winced with every shot, listening for the crash of the projectile against the priceless structure of the rudder's parts.

But the pilot-boat punching out in the dark at his rudder did not prevent him from keeping those deep-set eyes on the Morro rock. Presently he was satisfied ; he could see where the cliff broke off sheer into the water. The channel washed the rock at that point.

"A touch of port helm," he said, and waited to see whether the vessel responded after the attention his rudder had had at the hands of the rapid fire guns.

"A touch of port helm, sir," repeated Deignan, and the *Merrimac* slowly, softly turned toward the rock of the Morro. The gear still worked.

"Steady!"

"Steady, sir."

Now, even without helm, she would pass down the channel. The young man on the bridge was not now so furious against the pilot-boat, and began to realize what a brave show the tiny craft had made. At the moment when she had opened fire on the *Merrimac*, she did not know that it was not a battleship she was assailing; she could not be sure that one answering fire from the thing she was striking out at would not annihilate her.

A crash from the port side; a blast of sharp noise. "The western battery has opened on us, sir," called Charette, who was standing on the bridge ready to run with orders if the signal ropes should be destroyed.

"Very well; pay no attention to it," replied Lieutenant Hobson. Morro point required all of his present attention.

You have walked down the street in melting winter weather and seen the Eighth Grade crowd packing snowballs on the corner opposite where you had to pass. You have walked along as though you did not see them; as though the snowballs they might throw at you would be nothing. And when you got to a point where you could no longer watch for them out of the tail of your eye, you have braced yourself against the feel of the first blow from the missiles. You probably hoped it would not take you behind the ear. Now, imagine those snowballs

to have been two-, three-, four-, six-inch shells, any one of which, taking you behind the ear, would put an abrupt stop to all your private plans, and you can see how hard it was for the men on the *Merrimac* to "pay no attention to it."

But they did "pay no attention to it." Murphy, lying flat on the forecastle head, with one hand on the ax-helve, was ready to cut the lashings of the anchor and fire the first torpedo. He had nothing else on his mind than those two duties. The crew of the *Iowa* had selected him from among them all to represent the honor and courage of the *Iowa*, and he was going to do it. Charette stood at the end of the bridge, watching everything, ready to be handy man for the tall young lieutenant. Deignan was minding his wheel as though he were entering a peaceful harbor in broad day. Down in the engine room Phillips and Kelly were tending to the engine, and nothing else. The others, lying prone at their posts, were waiting for their cues to set about their work.

"Whir-r-r-r! Cling!!" A shell sang its song across the bridge, and brought up with a sharp metallic ring against something. Lieutenant Hobson looked about to see what had happened. Deignan and the binnacle were still there; the engine-room telegraph was still standing; Charette was over by the bridge rail, calm as a fisherman. Brave chap, that Charette!

The quiet young man stepped to the engine

telegraph, and signaled "Stop!" The answer-pointer turned to "Stop" and stayed there. The wheel ceased its hissing in the water; the pulse of the engine died out of the huge frame of the vessel.

"You may lay down to your torpedoes now, Charette," said Lieutenant Hobson.

"Aye, aye, sir;" and Charette went.

The *Merrimac* slipped under the sheer cliff that was topped by the Morro. The rock shut off the sky. They were close in. Suddenly a swell caught the ship by the stern and swung her bow toward the rock.

"Starboard!" commanded Hobson, quickly.

"Starboard, sir."

Still she swung in, her nose creeping up toward the rock.

"Starboard, I say!" repeated Hobson.

"The helm's astarboard, sir."

Fifty, forty, thirty feet from the rock before the helm took hold and swung the bow of the boat into the course again. They were anxious moments. If the steering gear was gone there was no chance for them to carry out the plan. The vessel would sink, but it would sink anywhere but in the right place.

"Meet her!" as the *Merrimac* straightened out. A thrill of joy shivered up his spine when he saw her turn; he knew the gear still stood.

"Meet her, sir."

All this time the fire from the Spanish batteries

was increasing. Spot after spot on the hillsides burst into snarling fire ; the air was a-whistle with projectiles ; there was a constant clank, clank, of steel on steel as they found their target, and a crackling racket of the wreck in the wake of the shells. Projectiles were cutting through and across the collier from three or four directions ; soon the Spanish war-ships would be in range.

Half a ship's length now would bring them to the position where Hobson had determined to begin to sink the craft. Half a ship's length more before the helm would be put hard aport and the torpedoes started in their work of destruction. Good thing the Spaniards had not found the rudder with their steel fingers !

The sky opened behind the Morro. That was the place.

"Hard aport !" said the quiet young man on the bridge. It was the first order of the final manœuver.

"Hard aport, sir," echoed Deignan.

The ship slid straight ahead, without response to her helm.

"Hard aport, I say !" repeated Hobson, sharply. Perhaps Deignan, for the first time, had failed him.

"The helm is hard aport, sir, and lashed," Deignan reported.

If that was true, the steering gear was surely gone. For the *Merrimac* still bore straight down the channel, past the point where she must begin to turn athwart it, if she was to do any good.

"Very well, Deignan," said Lieutenant Hobson, quietly ; "lay down to your torpedo."

Half a ship's length back the steering gear had controlled the vessel ! Now, in the supreme moment, when everything depended on it, it was gone. And the huge vessel, with its 7,000 tons of dead weight, was charging through the water at a rate of four and three-quarter knots, with the tide sweeping them another knot and a half.

There was just one slim chance that the manœuvre could still be accomplished by the use of the anchors. It was a very slim chance ; the anchors would be doing more than could be expected of them if they brought the ship to a standstill with all her headway on her. But it was the only chance.

A pull on the cord that ran to Murphy's wrist. Then three strong pulls. A splashing in the water at the bow ; a rumbling run of chain, shivering the ship as it payed out over the side. In another instant, a shock, sharp and snappy, and a muffled ring sounding above the blast of Spanish guns. Torpedo number one had gone off ; there was a great hole in the bow of the *Merrimac*.

If the bow anchor chain, in breaking, as it must break under the strain of the huge plunging ship, should twist it a little in the channel, and the torpedoes should blow holes large enough in the bottom of her, there was still a chance that she would sink in a place where she would do some good as a stopper to the bottle.

But where were the other torpedoes? It was time for Charette to be firing two and three. It was past time. “Fire all torpedoes!” called Lieutenant Hobson. In the tumult of noise his voice was not heard.

Charette appeared on the bridge. “Number two and three will not fire, sir,” he said. “The battery cells are shattered all over the deck.”

The Socappa batteries had opened; the din of striking missiles was terrific. There was a constant clanging clatter, like firecrackers set off by bunches in a tin bucket, as the shells struck the ship.

“Very well,” replied Lieutenant Hobson; “lay down and underrun all the others, beginning with number four, and spring them as soon as possible.”

Just then number five went off. Deignan had waited for two and three, and when they had not followed number one, he had tried four. But the batteries for four were scattered about the deck. Then he went down to Clausen at number five. Between them they got it off.

Everything was going wrong. The ship would be a long time sinking, with only two torpedoes fired. Still, if the anchors held there was a chance. Lieutenant Hobson started aft to watch the letting go of the stern anchor. It was a very important operation now.

As he passed along the gangway he found the men gathered together in the place where they had agreed to meet, near the life-boat. Montague was with them. The stern anchor, then, had been let go

already. As a matter of fact, it had been shot free ; the lashings had been cut by the fire from the Spanish guns and it had fallen into the water without the aid of Montague.

Lieutenant Hobson looked over the bulwarks. The air was whizzing full of steel, but he looked over the bulwarks. Of course, whether he looked over the bulwarks or hid behind them made little difference to his safety. Any one of those steel missiles that had started for him would not be turned aside by the frail upper works of an iron collier. But there is a good deal of the ostrich in all of us. If we get where we cannot see actual danger, we can more easily convince ourselves that it does not exist. There is some comfort behind a bulwark, after all.

But Hobson looked over the bulwark. He was interested beyond everything in the question whether the chains would hold or not. The *Merrimac* was lying just in front of the Estrella battery, apparently motionless, and about two-thirds athwart the channel. The quiet young man took a bearing of the bow on the shore. For an instant the vessel seemed to hold still, but in the next it could be seen to be moving.

There was nothing to be done ; they could only wait. The fire from the batteries, increased now by the fire from the Spanish vessels up the harbor, made every spot unsafe. They lay on the deck, behind the bulwarks, trying not to be seen. If they

should be seen, they would draw the fire of half a dozen guns, and their slim chance to escape with their lives would be swept away.

Slowly the vessel swung out into the channel and swept on with the tide. As she drifted, there was a terrific thump from beneath ; she lifted and lurched. A mine had been sprung.

"Lads, they are helping us !" cried the quiet young man, seeing hope again.

The vessel was gradually settling in the water. Shots were flying back and forth across her deck ; the continuous crash of the firing guns was sprinkled with the clink of steel on steel as the projectiles found their mark. The men lay in a group behind the starboard bulwark, wondering when one of those projectiles would plough its way through them.

The *Merrimac* seemed to be stopping in her slow drifting. Lieutenant Hobson, taking bearings, discovered that her stern was aground on Estrella. If she hung there long enough, the thing they had come to do would be accomplished, in spite of everything.

They settled down to plan for the time when the vessel should have sunk. Useless to try to get over the side. If they once showed themselves they would draw all the fire of all the Spanish guns, and the end would come soon.

Lieutenant Hobson issued an order that no man should move until he had received further orders. "We will wait here, lads, until the moon sets," he

said. "When it is dark we will go down the after-hatch, to the coal, where her stern will be out of water. Some of us will come up and get the rifles and cartridges out of the boat. We will remain inside all day, and to-night at ebb-tide try to make our way to the squadron. If the enemy comes on board, we will remain quiet until he finds us, and will repel him. If he then turns his artillery on the place where we are, we will swim out to points farther forward."

Those were the plans made when it seemed that the *Merrimac* would sink with her stern fast on Estrella point.

"Remain where you are, lads ; I am going to take a turn to reconnoiter," Hobson added, when the plans were understood. What he wanted to do was to go forward and hoist the American flag, so that it might be floating over the *Merrimac* when it plunged under the waters of Santiago harbor.

Charette interposed. "Please do not do so, sir," he said. "If you go they will see you and see us all." Charette was not thinking about himself ; he was thinking about the quiet young man who had brought them to this, and he knew the only way to induce him not to expose himself was to put the plea on the grounds of the safety of the men. Sometimes real heroism is hidden behind words like that.

Hobson abandoned his sentiment about raising the flag, and lay down on the deck with the rest of the men, to wait. The firing of the enemy was ap-

palling. Guns of all caliber and kinds were potting at them at the highest speed attainable. Two regiments of infantry were on the shores of the bottle's neck, with magazine rifles. The din was incessant, and the rattle of missiles against the iron sides of the stranded and sinking collier was like the rat-tat-tat of a red-headed woodpecker on a tin cupola. The deck of the vessel shook and trembled under the blows of exploding shells. Great wonder that the little group of men, lying face down in the shadow of the bulwarks in the starboard gangway, were not blown and torn to pieces. It was hard to lie like that, waiting, but they did not offer to move, any of them. Strange sight! Seven men in their underclothes with life belts and revolvers strapped about them, lying on the deck of a sinking ship under the sinking moon, with the hills about popping death at them.

Lieutenant Hobson, thrusting his head through a chock in the bulwarks, perceived that the vessel was moving again; that it no longer hung on Estrella point. The force of the tide had swept it into the channel, and was straightening it out. It was already low in the water, but it was sinking so slowly that there was no chance of bringing it to the bottom in time to block the channel. Their work, their worry, their risk, had been for nothing.

Slowly the *Merrimac* drifted up and up the channel between the blasting fire from both sides and in front. The moments were intense; it was a race

between the tide that was sweeping the ship inward, and the water that was creeping up in her hold. At last she came to a stop in a bight behind Smith's Cay, an island on the western edge of the bottle's neck. She lurched ; she jerked ; she bowed her head, and plunged beneath the water. The stern rose and heeled heavily ; then righted itself and went under.

A great rush of water came up the gangway, sweeping up the seven men. There was a spouting, leaping, foaming, roaring tumult in the water. It was full of floating débris ; spars, barrels, planks. They charged end on against the men struggling in the whirlpool. The men were tossed about in the vortex. The life-preservers kept them afloat ; for a time, until the whirl settled, they were helpless against it.

They looked for the life-boat. It had been wrenched away in the sinking of the ship and was floating off somewhere beyond sight. The catamaran was the largest piece of floating wreckage. It had been made fast to the deck with a rope, which still held. It more than held ; it dragged one edge of the catamaran slightly downward, so that the other edge was lifted above the water. The men gathered under this lifted edge, clinging with their fingers to the float.

The firing had ceased as soon as the *Merrimac* had begun to go down. In a short space, lights began to appear on the surface of the water, and

boats came out to the scene of the wreck to pick up survivors. The Spaniards thought they had sunk a war-ship that had tried to steal in.

The Americans clung close beneath the shadow of the catamaran. They were afraid that if they were seen there they might be shot. No purpose now in being shot. Perhaps, in the morning, they would find a way to escape. In any event, they could surrender, and make sure of their lives.

It was a bitter hardship, to cling to that slippery, floating thing until daybreak. The men had been through much. But they clung, and in the morning they were found there by a launch in which was Admiral Cervera himself. How they were locked up as prisoners in the Morro during a bombardment by the American squadron; how they were afterward held as prisoners in the town of Santiago until the Americans occupied it, and how they were received at last as heroes in the fleet and by their country, is another story.

But what Cervera said, under his breath, when he learned what they had done, is a part of this story.

He said: “Valiente!”

Which, you will see at once, is just like our word valiant; but in Spanish it means much more. And it needs to mean much more to describe what those men did in Santiago harbor on that morning in June, 1898.







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